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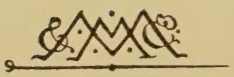

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TORONTO

A History of The British Army

BY

THE HON. J. W. FORTESCUE, LL.D. EDIN.
HONORARY FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

VOL. X

1814–1815

Quae caret ora cruore nostro?

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CHAPTER XVI

RETURNING now to the general movement of the Allied Armies on the Continent, the reader will recall that their military forces had been organised into three principal hosts: the Army of the North under Bernadotte on the right; the Army of Silesia under Blücher in the centre; and the Army of Bohemia under Schwarzenberg on the left. Of the plan of campaign proposed for these two last something has already been said; and it is now necessary to trace the movements of the first, which were governed in some degree by the insurrection of the Dutch against French rule on the 15th of November. The news of this insurrection was received by the Cabinet in London on the 21st of November; and, as we have seen, Ministers resolved immediately to send out a force of about six thousand men under Sir Thomas Graham, and to furnish in addition twenty thousand muskets, for the support of the movement. 1813. Nov. 21.

First of all, however, they resolved to despatch Major-general Herbert Taylor at once to Holland, in order to collect all possible information respecting the resources, means and plans of the insurgents. This officer, who was an excellent linguist, had begun life in the Foreign Office at the age of sixteen, and made the campaign of 1793 in Flanders as Secretary to Sir James Murray; after which, having obtained a commission, he became assistant secretary to the Duke of York, and continued with him as Private Secretary at the Horse Guards until 1805. At the recommendation of Pitt he then

1813. passed in the same capacity to the service of George the Third, who until that date, owing to the jealousy of Ministers, had never had a Secretary, but was now compelled by rapid failure of eyesight to employ one. With the old King Taylor remained until his master's mind gave way, when Queen Charlotte took him over as Secretary and confidential adviser; and it was from the atmosphere of her Court that he was hurried away at a few hours' notice on a diplomatic mission, with the promise of the command of a brigade of Graham's force. One can hardly conceive of a training worse calculated to fit a man for service in the field; but Graham went out of his way to declare not only that Taylor was a most valuable officer but that he would make an excellent chief of the staff to any army.

The course of the counter-revolution in Holland had not, as a matter of fact, been very encouraging; for, though there was much enthusiasm, there was no organisation and no armed force of any kind. The French commanders, however, evacuated the Hague,
Nov. 23. Rotterdam and Amsterdam in panic; and on the 23rd of November a party of Cossacks entered the capital. These troops were the extreme advanced guard of General Winzingerode's detachment of Bernadotte's army which, marching up the Yssel by Zwolle, Zutphen and Deventer, had reached Amersfort on
Nov. 24. that same day. On the 24th the French, whose main force was at Gorkum on the Maas, recovered from their panic, and made a general advance eastward and northward upon Dordrecht, Woerden and Amsterdam, and, though repelled by armed burghers from the first and last of these places, succeeded in
Nov. 30. regaining possession of Woerden. On the 30th the Prince of Orange landed at Scheveningen from England; but his appearance gave no kind of unity or guidance to the insurrection. Admiral Verhuell still occupied Helder for the French with the Texel fleet. Happily on the same day a Prussian force of fifteen thousand men under General Bülow also appeared on the Yssel,

and took Arnheim, at the junction of the Yssel and the Rhine, by storm. Bernadotte, however, unwilling to compromise his prospects by actual collision with a French army, made no attempt to support Bülow and Winzingerode, but, after loitering for a time on the Elbe, invaded Holstein and forced the Danes to surrender, under an armistice, the whole of that province and a part of Schleswig as a pledge for the cession of Norway to Sweden. Never had man a more single eye to the main chance than the Gascon Crown Prince. 1813. Dec. 16.

Such was the situation when on the 3rd of December Taylor landed at Scheveningen with the twenty thousand muskets. He found no man ready to take charge of these arms, no place prepared to receive them, and no organised body of any kind to make use of them. There was much shouting of *Oranje Boven*, and nothing more. North and eastward the evacuation of Utrecht by the French and the capture of Arnheim had done something towards strengthening the position of the insurgents, and the occupation of Brielle by armed peasants afforded a landing-place for troops from England; but the enemy still held Helvoetsluis, Gorkum and Nimeguen on the Maas and Waal, and there seemed slight prospect of dislodging them. The Russian force on the spot under General Benckendorff numbered little over six thousand men; Bülow's fifteen thousand were extended along the Yssel and the Rhine as far as Düsseldorf; Graham's corps had not even disembarked; and, as there was no commander-in-chief, each party acted as seemed right in its own eyes. Dec. 3.

On the 6th the French evacuated Helvoetsluis, just in time for the Guards to land there; but the remainder of the force, together with Graham, remained wind-bound, and there was no kind of staff, no paymaster, no blankets nor field-equipage, no transport and no artillery attached to the expedition. Even so, however, the appearance of the Guards was enough to make the French evacuate Willemstadt and retire on Bergen-op-Zoom; and three hundred of Benckendorff's Cossacks sufficed to capture Breda, and take six hundred Dec. 6.

1813. out of the sixteen hundred of the garrison. It was evident that the enemy was weak and bewildered, and that any force of real strength might speedily have recovered Holland, or at any rate have paralysed the feeble French garrisons and marched upon Antwerp, which was the great object—so far as England was concerned—of sending troops to the Low Countries at all. But the difficulty, as one officer observed, was to establish any fixed plan or concert between people who were all independent of each other, and acknowledged no superior directing authority.

Dec. 10. On the 10th the enemy abandoned Willemstadt;

Dec. 15. and on the 15th Graham with the greater part of his troops[1] anchored in the Roompot, where lay Admiral Young's squadron of eleven line-of-battle ships. The force was of extremely poor quality, including many boys and old men; for the battalions had been scraped together from the depôts on the supposition that only garrison duties would be required of them. Graham had accepted the command with reluctance from a sheer sense of duty, and looked forward to no better result than to

Dec. 17. escape disgrace. On the 17th the troops disembarked at Stavenisse on the island of Tholen, and Graham hastened forward to the town of the same name in order to obtain information concerning Bergen-op-Zoom,

Dec. 18. which lies about four miles from it. On the 18th he reconnoitred the fortress in company with Benckendorff; and was acquainted that the garrison numbered about three thousand men of an inferior description, the

[1] Graham's Force.

Guards Brigade. Maj.-gen. Cooke det. 1st Guards, 800; dets. Coldstream and 3rd Guards, 800 . . . . . = 1600

Skerrett's Brigade. 2/37th, 500; 44th, 500; 55th, 400; 2/69th, 500; Veteran batt., 500 . = 2400

Mackenzie's Brigade. 2/35th, 600; det. 52nd, 300; 73rd, ?; det. 3/95th, 250 . . . = ?

Gibbs's Brigade. 2/25th, ?; 33rd, ?; 54th, 3/56th, 400 . . . . . = ?

2nd Hussars, K.G.L.

The 25th, 33rd, 56th, and Veterans did not arrive with Graham.

French having been reinforced both there and at Antwerp. In fact the happy moment had passed away, and a great opportunity had been lost, chiefly through the misfortune of continually easterly winds, which forbade the passage of troops from England. 1813.

On the 20th a messenger reached Graham from Benckendorff, announcing that a considerable corps of the enemy was advancing from Antwerp upon Breda, and begging that the British would move forward and fall upon their left flank. Now, had Benckendorff left Breda as he found it, this hostile movement would have been of no great importance, for the sole defence of the fortress had been a wet ditch, which, when frozen, presented no obstacle whatever. The ramparts were of so gentle a slope that a man could ride over them; there were nowhere any palisades; the place contained few guns and no casemates, and was surrounded by outworks which, being unarmed and unoccupied, could have furnished useful shelter for an assailing force. Hence the French had evacuated the place without hesitation; but Benckendorff, anxious to win fame, had persuaded the Dutch to place fifty guns and other munitions of war in it without a thought for the garrison that was to defend it; and now, when danger threatened, he called upon his colleagues to make good his mistake. Graham had no choice but to refuse. He had only five thousand men all told, no cavalry and no artillery. It was vital to him to hold Tholen with its bridge in front of Bergen-op-Zoom, so as to cover Zealand and his access to the fleet; it was not less important to instal a sufficient garrison at Willemstadt, where the rest of his troops and all his supplies and stores remained; and, when these services had been provided for, there were no men left for the field. Dec. 20.

On the following day arrived an aide-de-camp from Bülow, intimating that his corps was now distributed along a line east and west, confronting the fortresses held by the French. Thus he was holding Arnheim Dec. 21.

1813. opposite Nimeguen; Bommel and Crevecœur over against Bois le Duc; and Gertruidenberg in face of Breda; and he also asked for assistance in delivering
Dec. 24. the place last named. On the 24th the Hereditary Prince of Orange, fresh from Wellington's side in the Peninsula, appeared at Graham's head-quarters to press the same request. Graham pushed out a patrol eastward from Tholen to Rozendaal with orders to spread the report that he was advancing with five thousand men, which had the desired effect of making the
Dec. 25. French retire; and on the 25th at last the rest of his troops and his artillery arrived at Willemstadt. Graham therefore shifted his head-quarters to that port, and cantoned his troops from west to east from Tholen through Willemstadt to Zevenbergen, so as to be at hand to support Benckendorff at Breda.

Hardly had he done so, however, when Benckendorff sent word that he must withdraw his troops from garrison, as Winzingerode was marching for Düsseldorf. Graham begged Bülow to advance and save Breda; but the Prussians could not arrive before the 5th of January 1814; and, as the French were again approaching the fortress and had actually reached Hoogstraeten, which was half-way to it from Antwerp, Sir Thomas entreated Benckendorff to wait still for a few days. The Russian officer answered that he must march on the 2nd, but that he would first drive back the French, and would leave two regiments of
1814. horse to cover the British cantonments, until their own
Jan. 2. cavalry should arrive. On the 2nd, however, he moved off without engaging the French, and without leaving a man behind him. A hard frost had set in, which rendered the ditches of Breda absolutely indefensible. Though the risk of isolating a part of his small force in the fortress was very great, Graham felt compelled in the circumstances to accept it. Accordingly on the 2nd he stationed Gibbs's brigade in the place; and immediately afterwards by great good
Jan. 5. fortune there was a few days' thaw. On the 5th

the Prussians began to arrive at Breda; on the 7th, 1814.
Bülow established his head-quarters in the town; and Jan. 7.
the arrival of the British cavalry on the same day relieved Graham of all further anxiety.

Sir Thomas was now the senior officer on the spot; but in deference to the large numbers of troops under the orders of Bülow, he generously waived his rank, and declared his readiness to subordinate himself to the Prussian General. On the 8th the two com- Jan. 8.
manders met in council, and Bülow propounded an elaborate plan for driving the enemy back from their advanced station and cutting them off from Antwerp. The enterprise was by no means without good promise of success. The French lay at Hoogstraeten and Wortel, about fourteen miles due south of Breda and twenty miles north-east of Antwerp; and to go from Breda to Antwerp by way of Hoogstraeten is to traverse two sides of an obtuse-angled triangle. The main road from Breda to Antwerp runs almost as straight as a crow flies from one town to the other, and passing seven miles west of Hoogstraeten forms the third side of the triangle. Obviously therefore, if the Allies succeeded in reaching a point on the main road due west of Hoogstraeten before the French quitted their position, they would be nearer to Antwerp than was their enemy.

Bülow designed that the British contingent should cover his right against any attack of the French from Bergen-op-Zoom or from the forts on the Lower Scheldt, and should keep well forward so as to intercept the enemy's retreat from Hoogstraeten; while the Prussians should advance along the by-ways east of the main road from Breda to Antwerp. The movement began on the 10th, when the British Jan. 10.
were assembled at Rozendaal, and Bülow, marching some way before instead of behind them, actually found himself on the great road, as near to Antwerp as the French were. This was a fine stroke of luck; but, as it was not what the Prussian General

1814. had looked for, he scorned it, stuck to his original
Jan. 10. plan, marched by cross-roads to attack the enemy's front instead of improving his situation in their left rear, and, after losing a good many men, compelled his adversaries to retreat upon Antwerp. The British meanwhile had been by Bülow's orders kept halted at Rozendaal, when they ought to have been pushed forward to intercept the French retreat ; and altogether a promising operation was wrecked by Prussian imbecility.

Jan. 11. On the 11th the united force solemnly advanced ten miles to the south, Graham's head-quarters being at Calmpthout, and Bülow's at Loenhout. In the course of the night the Prussian cavalry was surprised by the French at West Malle, and suffered considerably ;
Jan. 12. and on the 12th Bülow expressed a desire to concentrate the army more closely before approaching Antwerp. On that day, therefore, the First British Division[1] advanced no further than to Capelle ; while the Second came forward from Nispen and Esschen to Calmpthout.

Jan. 13. On the 13th the Guards were detached to Hoevenen and Orderen to observe Fort Lillo ; while Taylor's brigade occupied Capelle, throwing out flank-guards towards Putten and Bergen-op-Zoom, and keeping up communication with the Guards. The general idea was that the Second Division of the British should move south-westward by Eeckeren upon the western flank of Merxem, while the Prussians should approach the front of that village by the main road. General Thumen, who commanded Bülow's leading division, marched upon Merxem accordingly, drove the enemy from a few houses of the long straggling street, and reported that he had occupied the whole ; whereupon Bülow summoned the British to join Thumen without delay.

[1] First Division. General Cooke.
Gibbs's Brigade : 25th ; 33rd ; 54th ; 56th.
Taylor's (late Skerrett's) : 37th ; 44th ; 55th ; 69th.
Second Division. General Mackenzie.
Guards Brigade.
Mackenzie's : 35th ; det. 52nd ; 73rd ; det. 3/95th.

The Thirty-fifth, Fifty-second, Seventy-eighth (which had lately arrived) and Ninety-fifth, therefore, drew near to the village, and were received with musket-shots which were duly returned by the Ninety-fifth. Graham and his staff, galloping to the front, ordered the Riflemen to cease fire, but, being saluted by a volley, directed the Seventy-eighth to advance. The Highlanders, though not five hundred strong, at once dashed into the village and cleared it with the bayonet, killing many of the French, including a general, and taking several prisoners. It then appeared that Thumen had never captured more than a small fraction of the village and that, mistaking the British for French, he had evacuated even that fraction upon seeing them march upon it. 1814. Jan. 13.

Nor was this the last strange episode of the operations. No sooner were the British established in Merxem than Bülow announced that nothing further could be done, and that he must retire to protect Breda and his communications from possible molestation by Marshal Macdonald, who lay with ten thousand men at Venloo. Graham galloped off to the Prussian general to represent that the British had been decoyed into a place within a mile of the glacis of Antwerp and of a garrison of ten thousand men, and that the Prussians might at least wait until the red-coats could retreat simultaneously with them. But Bülow would not listen. His columns were already in motion northward, and he refused to stop them. Graham therefore maintained a bold front until nightfall, when he sent away his wounded, fewer than forty in number, and fell back to Calmpthout. Even then the Prussian rear-guard mistook the British for French and was on the point of firing upon them. In fact the conduct of Bülow and his officers was characteristically Prussian—mean, tricky, selfish, dishonourable, and therefore necessarily carrying with it nervous apprehension of reprisals alike from friend and foe. Graham was too good a soldier to expect any advantage from his colleague's aimless

1814. movement upon Antwerp, and relapsed without discontent into inactivity. He cantoned his troops to north and north-east of Bergen-op-Zoom at Steenbergen, Oudenbosch and Rozendaal, leaving Breda and its environs to be occupied by the Prussians.

Unsatisfactory to the last degree though the situation was, Graham with admirable self-control kept his temper, and spoke highly of Bülow in his public despatches. In a few days he received a letter from Bathurst pressing urgently for a second attempt upon Antwerp, and above all things for the destruction of the French fleet in the Scheldt, if possible. The enterprise seemed impracticable, for the whole of the British siege-train remained wind-bound in British ports, and, what was still more discouraging, the Dutch, while full of complaints of loss of trade and dearness of colonial produce, remained absolutely lethargic in the matter of reconquering their independence. However, upon receiving Graham's representations, Bülow agreed to abandon an attack which he had projected upon Marshal Macdonald, and to advance again upon Antwerp. Heavy artillery was collected from the Dutch
Jan. 30. arsenals; and on the 30th the Allies began their march southward by the same roads as before, Graham's head-quarters being on that day at Calmpthout. Bülow now raised difficulties as to the bombardment of the fleet at Antwerp, declaring very truly that such an operation was of interest to no country but England, and that he should infinitely prefer to extend his left and throw forward a part of his army upon Malines and Brussels. Graham compromised matters by agreeing to shift his force further eastward to Brecht, thus enabling the desired extension to be made. On the
Feb. 1. 1st of February it was arranged that the Prussians should move on Deurne and the British on Merxem, but that neither village should be approached till the morning of the 2nd, when both should be assailed simultaneously. Graham accordingly advanced no further than Brasschaet; but towards evening an aide-de-

camp came to him from Bülow announcing that the 1814.
Prussians were attacking Deurne, that they were meet- Feb. 1.
ing with stubborn resistance, and that he desired the British to make a diversion by falling upon Merxem. As it was too late in the day for any such thing, Graham contented himself with sending a patrol to drive in the French picquets before the village ; and, as a natural result of Bülow's trifling with his own plans, the Prussians were twice repulsed before Deurne, the greater part of which was held by the French all night.

At daybreak Graham directed the brigades[1] of Feb. 2.
Skerrett and Taylor to attack Merxem from east and west simultaneously ; and, though the village had been covered by abatis and otherwise placed in a good state of defence, it was carried with little difficulty by Taylor alone. The loss of the British was slight ; and the French, who made a very poor resistance, left two guns and two hundred prisoners in their hands. The British regiments then proceeded with great activity to construct their batteries ; but on the morning of the 3rd there Feb. 3.
came a new complication. Bülow announced that he, and Winzingerode also, had been summoned by Blücher to join in the general advance upon Paris. He consented at Graham's request to remain until the 6th ; and, in order to finish the business as soon as possible, Graham's batteries opened fire in the afternoon, and continued the bombardment of the fleet and dockyard for two days. Several shells fell in the dockyard and some on the ships, but there was not a sufficient weight of vertical fire to prevent the enemy from extinguishing any flames that were kindled. The Dutch artillery, indeed, proved to be very defective. Three large cannon burst, injuring several men, and the mortars were old-fashioned and inaccurate. On the evening of the 5th, Feb. 5.
therefore, the ordnance was withdrawn, and on the night of the 6th Graham quietly led back his troops to Brecht, Rozendaal and the vicinity, while Bülow went forward to Brussels on his way to join Blücher. Thus failed

[1] 33rd, 35th, 56th, 78th, 95th.

1814. the second feeble attempt upon Antwerp, perhaps the more certainly, since on the 2nd Carnot had taken command of the garrison.

Reverting now to the operations of the principal armies of the Allies, it will be remembered that on the
Feb. 1. 1st of February Blücher and Schwarzenberg had defeated Napoleon with heavy loss at La Rothière. In Paris there reigned panic and despair, and a corresponding elation awoke in the camps of the Allies, where it was confidently asserted that Napoleon had ceased to be dangerous, and that the war was practically over. Already in November 1813, the Allies had put forward certain proposals, equivocally expressed, as a basis for peace; and after long delay Caulaincourt, as Napoleon's foreign minister, had written on the 6th of January, privately to Metternich, expressing willingness to enter into negotiations. In reply Metternich gave him Chatillon-sur-Seine as the place where the representatives of the powers would meet him; and a first conference of these representatives, held on the 29th of January, decided that Caulaincourt should be invited to meet them on the 3rd of February. The Congress
Feb. 4. opened formally on the 4th, with no great sincerity upon either side, for each party was inclined to raise or lower its demands according to the favourable or unfavourable prospects of its armies at the moment. The Allies also, through jealousy and diversity of interest, were much divided as to the terms upon which an accommodation should be founded; and only Castlereagh, who spoke for England, showed resolute decision upon the one point, that he would agree to no peace which did not provide for a final settlement of the affairs of Europe.

So critical, however, was Napoleon's situation after the defeat of La Rothière that he was driven to
Feb. 6. desperation. On the 6th of February he retired from Troyes to Nogent, gave orders for the evacuation of Rome, Italy, Barcelona and Piedmont, and empowered Caulaincourt to accept the conditions offered by the

Allies. These conditions required the reduction of France to the frontier which had been hers in 1789. The Emperor cried out against such humiliation, but in the early morning of the 8th seemed inclined after all to give way. At seven o'clock, however, a messenger came in from Marmont with important intelligence. With heads turned by their good fortune at La Rothière, the Allies had thrown caution to the winds, and decided on the 2nd of February to march upon Paris in two independent columns, Blücher by the line of the Marne, Schwarzenberg by the banks of the Seine. On the 6th accordingly Blücher set out with fifty-seven thousand men, without waiting for Schwarzenberg, and advanced, trailing out his troops in so long a column that each of his four corps was a day's march apart from its fellows. The blunder cried aloud for punishment, and Napoleon, flying to his maps, vowed that in two days he would change the entire face of affairs.

1814. Feb. 8.

Leaving the corps of Victor and Oudinot to dispute the passage of the Seine with Schwarzenberg at Nogent, the Emperor fell upon Blücher's third corps at Champaubert on the 10th, defeated it completely, and thus cut the long line of the Prussian march in two, interposing his troops between the corps of Yorck and Sacken at Meaux, and that of Blücher at Chalons. Yorck and Sacken hastily fell back to Montmirail; but Napoleon, reaching that place before them, beat them on the 11th, and pursuing them, beat them again on the 12th at Château Thierry. On the 13th Blücher, pushing Marmont's weak corps before him with careless confidence, reached Champaubert; but on the 14th the Emperor, joining Marmont, turned upon the Prussians and routed them, inflicting a loss of six thousand men at a cost to himself of only seven hundred killed and wounded. Napoleon would gladly have hunted Blücher to Chalons and made an end of him, but Schwarzenberg had meanwhile advanced as far as Provins, Nangis, Montereau and Fontainebleau, where he learned of the succession of disasters which had befallen his colleague.

Feb. 10. Feb. 13. Feb. 14.

1814. The Allies became nervous and irresolute. Schwarzen-
Feb. 15. berg halted on the 15th, and remained stationary for three days "awaiting the development of Napoleon's manœuvres." He was not long kept in suspense. On the 15th the Emperor by forced marches reached Meaux; on the 16th he joined the corps of Victor and
Feb. 17. Oudinot at Guignes; and on the 17th he overthrew the advanced guard of the Allies, and began a general forward movement.

In the interim the plenipotentiaries, abating some of their pretensions under pressure of misfortune, had on the 14th agreed to a preliminary treaty offering rather more favourable terms to Napoleon, and this was submitted to Caulaincourt on the 17th. With this treaty as a pretext Schwarzenberg on the same day sent in a flag to propose a cessation of arms. The only answer of Napoleon was to continue his offensive operations, whereupon Schwarzenbeg retreated hurriedly by forced marches to Troyes. There he faced about and formed his line of battle; but Napoleon, having lost contact with the Austro-Russian army through the false movements of some of his lieutenants, did not come up with
Feb. 22. him until the 22nd, by which time Blücher had rallied his discomfited forces at Chalons and had made three marches towards the Aube to join his colleague. Napoleon, though he had only seventy thousand men, had every intention of attacking and beating first the hundred and twenty thousand before him, and then of turning north to deal with Blücher; but Schwarzenberg, with the full approval of Castlereagh and of the Emperor of Austria, retreated in the early hours of
Feb. 23. the 23rd. On the advice of the Tsar it was now agreed that the army of Bohemia should fall back to Chaumont; and that Blücher, reinforced by the corps of Winzingerode and Bülow, should be free to go whither he would; upon which decision the fiery old man made up his mind to march at once upon Paris by way of Coulommiers.

On the 26th therefore the general situation was as

follows. Napoleon with seventy-four thousand men was at Troyes; and Schwarzenberg at Chaumont with nearly double the number. Blücher with forty-eight thousand men was making a dangerous flank march with Napoleon in his rear, and ten thousand men under Marmont and Macdonald on his front. Further to the south Augereau was taking the offensive from Lyons against the Austrian General Bubna in Switzerland, twenty-eight thousand men against twenty thousand, with orders from Napoleon to capture Geneva, and then strike at Schwarzenberg's communications between Bâle and Langres. In Italy Eugène Beauharnais, with forty-eight thousand men, occupied the line of the Mincio to repel General Bellegarde with seventy-four thousand. Lastly Wellington, as we have seen, had manœuvred Soult out of the entrenched camp at Bayonne, and was about to attack him at Orthez. 1814. Feb. 26.

Upon the arrival of Schwarzenberg's headquarters at Chaumont, Castlereagh, observing the mutual jealousies and mistrust of the Allies, brought forward a project for a new treaty of alliance to summarise and supersede all former agreements. Hereby the contracting parties undertook, in case France should reject their terms, to pursue the war with six hundred thousand men, England providing a subsidy of five millions for the year 1814, while in case of a subsequent attack by France, each bound himself to help the others with sixty thousand men. The treaty, which was to last for twenty years, was only signed after some stormy discussion on the 10th of March, but was ante-dated to the 1st. This instrument was the foundation of the Quadruple Alliance, called also the Holy Alliance, which governed Europe until 1848. Mar. 10.

Meanwhile, upon learning of Blücher's march, Napoleon left forty thousand men under Macdonald to watch Schwarzenberg, and, quitting Troyes on the 27th of February, advanced north-westward with thirty-five thousand men upon the Prussian General's flank and rear. Blücher, hearing of the movement, retreated Feb. 27.

1814. in alarm to the north-east, and, thanks to the surrender of Soissons by a weak French commandant, was able to escape across the Aisne, and march upon Laon. Napoleon beat his rear-guard at Craonne on the 7th
Mar. 9-10. of March, but was defeated in a two days' battle at Laon, and retired on the evening of the 10th to Soissons, which had been reoccupied by a small French garrison. Had not fortune turned against the Emperor by delivering the bridge of Soissons for a few days to his enemies, he would almost certainly have routed Blücher and made an end, for a time, of the Army of Silesia.

The prospects of Napoleon were now exceedingly dark, for he was oppressed not only by his own disappointments but by the defeat of Soult at Orthez, and even more by the extreme sluggishness of Augereau, who showed no disposition to make the swift raid upon Schwarzenberg's communications, which had been designed by his master. However, Napoleon reorganised his army, though uncertain whither to lead it, until on
Mar. 12. the 12th of March he suddenly learned that a detachment of Russians, about fifteen thousand strong, had occupied Rheims. He at once sent out a force to attack them, which was done with complete success, the Russians losing some six thousand men, and the French little more than seven hundred. On the same day Blücher, after forty-eight hours of delay, had resumed the offensive ; but on hearing of the mishap at Rheims he cancelled his orders immediately. Though he had, by this time, been reinforced by the corps of Bülow and Winzingerode from Holland, he dreaded a rising of the French peasants in his rear, and mistrusted Bernadotte, who lay with twenty-three thousand Swedes at Liége and declined to move. Blücher's apprehensions as to the peasantry were well-founded, for the brutality of his soldiers—not altogether unprovoked by the proceedings of the French during their victorious years in Prussia—was well calculated to produce an insurrection ; but Bernadotte was only biding his time until the issue of the struggle should be decided in order to fly to the

help of the victorious side, and make good terms for himself. Schwarzenberg, who had begun a slow and feeble advance, likewise halted ; and indeed the news of the defeat at Rheims almost threw the Army of Bohemia into a panic. Orders and counter-orders were showered down in rapid succession, and it was finally resolved to concentrate to the rear between Troyes and Pougy. 1814.

On the 17th Napoleon marched from Rheims for Arcis-sur-Aube, intending to cross the Aube at that point and fall upon Schwarzenberg's rear. On the 18th, hearing that his enemy was retiring, he turned a little westward, hoping to pass the river lower down and to catch at any rate Schwarzenberg's rear-guard ; but, though he overtook the tail of it on the 19th, he was too late to prevent the general concentration of the Allied army. He therefore resolved to march eastward, gather up the garrisons of his frontier-fortresses, and fall with every man that he could collect upon the rear and communications of the Allies, taking the route by the banks of the Aube, as though he were still in pursuit of their rear-guard. Mar. 17. Mar. 19.

Finding that his redoubtable adversary was no longer on his flank, Schwarzenberg took courage, faced about and actually attacked the Emperor at Arcis on the 20th and 21st; but, though fighting with a numerical superiority of three to one and with much advantage of position, he failed through sheer fright to destroy the French army. The Emperor therefore continued his march upon St. Dizier, expecting to draw the Allies after him ; and indeed the movement did at first inspire some of the weaker spirits among them—and they were many—with the idea of immediate retreat. But intercepted letters revealed not only the true purport of Napoleon's manœuvre, but also the existence of serious disaffection towards his rule at Paris, which might find active expression if an invading army were to approach the capital. After much hesitation, therefore, it was determined first that the Army of Bohemia should proceed towards Chalons to regain touch with that of

1814. Silesia, and then that both should abandon their original line of operations and advance straight upon Paris, leaving a detachment only to follow up Napoleon and
Mar. 25. screen their movements. On the 25th of March accordingly the host faced to the westward, and, having appointed the 28th as the time and Meaux as the place for their junction, began the fateful march that was to end the war.

Many years later Wellington, after expressing unbounded admiration for Napoleon's manœuvres in the campaign of 1814, declared his opinion that, if the great Captain had possessed enough patience to continue the same system for a little longer, he would have prevented the Allies from reaching Paris. Certainly Schwarzenberg showed most miserable trepidation in Napoleon's presence. Still some allowance must be made for a man who is encumbered by the presence of two Emperors and a King, each one of them capable of hampering, if not of arresting, his operations, and no two of them agreed respecting the account to which a final victory should be turned, were one to be secured. Blücher was not immune to the paralysing terror of Napoleon's presence at the head of an army. The old Field-marshal was indeed too ill to take up the duty of command on the second day of the battle of Laon; and his orders, which would probably have brought about decisive results, were countermanded by the timidity of the greatly over-rated Gneisenau. But, even so, Blücher waited for ten days after his success at Laon before he could gather courage to resume the offensive. Small wonder that Wellington should have written that he did not understand the position at Rheims and Chalons, particularly after the defeat of the French at Laon.[1]

In the south of France Wellington, by adopting measures in every way the reverse of Blücher's system of burning and pillaging, had produced correspondingly different effects upon the population. By enforcing

[1] *Wellington Despatch.* To Hope, 26th March 1814.

strict discipline in his army, by paying for all produce taken from the French, and perhaps most of all by reviving the coastal trade in all parts occupied by his troops, he had won not only the confidence but the goodwill of the inhabitants, and had made the orderly redcoats far more acceptable neighbours to the peasantry than were the ill-controlled and ill-nourished levies which served under the command of Soult. It is a significant fact that the Marshal's transport-service suffered greatly because the oxen of the country were sold to Wellington's commissaries; and the measures taken by the French commander to check this traffic with his enemies tended to throw the peasants more than ever into the arms of the British. The victory of Orthez, therefore, produced a favourable impression rather than the contrary upon Southern France, and incidentally decided Wellington to make use of the Bourbons, who had for some weeks been plaguing him with requests for help and offers of an army of their partisans. The Duke of Angoulême, son of that Count of Artois who is better known as Charles the Tenth, had for a month past been lounging about the skirts of the British quarters, receiving little encouragement from Wellington, though reviving loyal sentiments at least among the representatives of the old nobility. 1814.

The situation of the British Commander-in-Chief was a delicate one. To countenance the Bourbons was, as an act of war, a perfectly legitimate means of undermining Napoleon's authority, distracting his energy and diminishing his resources; but the Allies were engaged in negotiations with Napoleon in his capacity of actual ruler of France. Wellington saw no reason why a peace with Napoleon should be less secure than with any other French sovereign. Obviously, therefore, so long as such a peace might be concluded, it was unfair to invite the partisans of the Bourbons to compromise themselves for the benefit of the Allies by open insurrection against one whose domination over them might any day be re-established

1814. by the act and agreement of the Allies themselves. Still, the advantage of strengthening the hold of the British upon the country, whether by overt consent of the local authorities or only through the stealthy toleration of individuals, was very great. Even greater would be the gain of such conditional countenance on the part of the French, if the Bourbons should obtain for the Allies the bloodless surrender of a new port of supply on the coast, and a centre of friendly influence upon their right flank during their march eastward in pursuit of Soult.

Such a port and such a centre seemed to offer themselves in Bordeaux and Pau; and accordingly
Mar. 7. Beresford was ordered on the 7th of March to enter the former with twelve thousand men, and General Fane to approach the latter with a regiment of cavalry, a battalion of infantry and two guns. Both of these officers received the same instructions. They were to continue the existing local authorities in office, if willing to remain, or, if not, to replace them by others elected by the inhabitants. If the magistrates and people should desire to proclaim Lewis the Eighteenth, they were not to be prevented from doing so. They were to be assured that, by declaring themselves the enemies of Bonaparte, they would be considered by the British as friends and deserving of their assistance; but they were to be warned that negotiations for peace were still in train, and that, upon the conclusion of that peace, all aid from the British would come to an end.

At Pau the Mayor simply accepted Wellington's orders, expressing confidence in the discipline and good faith of the British Army; and all the troops but a single squadron were withdrawn. On the 12th of
Mar. 12. March, Beresford's force, preceded by an advanced guard of forty dragoons, entered Bordeaux. The city, cosmopolitan as are all great ports, had suffered terribly from the British naval blockade; and after twenty years of war its population had shrunk in 1814 to little more than one half of its numbers in 1794. The

Mayor, whose name, Lynch, indicates Irish origin, had before the Revolution been in the cavalry of the Royal Household, had settled down after some vicissitudes as a Bonapartist, but since the end of 1812 had been intriguing with the Royalists. Very dexterously he contrived to organise a demonstration in favour of the Bourbons; and, in the midst of his complimentary speech to Beresford, he cast away the tricolour cockade, donned the white, and hoisted the white flag of the Royal House of France. Beresford firmly declined to take possession of the town in the name of Lewis the Eighteenth, though he promised the inhabitants protection; but the Duke of Angoulême, following stealthily in rear, made a ceremonial entry in the afternoon. Losing his head completely under the applause of the crowd, this Prince wrote rapturously to Wellington of the unanimity, the joy and the acclamations of the good folk of Bordeaux, and announced his intention of taking over the administration of the district. Beresford was very sceptical about the joy, and still more sceptical about the unanimity; but Lynch, disregarding all protests from him and from Wellington, proceeded in a breezy fashion to act as if the Royalist feeling were as intense as Angoulême had reported it to be. Owing to the rapid progress of subsequent events no great harm came of this; for the Bordelais cheerfully assumed the white cockade when all fear of Napoleon's vengeance had been banished. But meanwhile the port of Bordeaux was not opened to the Allies, owing to the lack of an English fleet. 1814. March.

His political measures thus taken, Wellington, after arranging with Hope for the siege of the citadel of Bayonne, called up Freire's Spaniards and the heavy cavalry to take the place of Beresford's detachment, and on the 9th and 11th extended his cantonments. The Light Division moved eastward and southward from Aire on the road to Plaisance, the Sixth Division east and northward from the same point towards Nogaro; the Third Division followed as far as Barce- Mar. 9-11.

1814. lonne in support of both; Hill's division spread itself from Garlin, about ten miles south of Aire, to St. Mont on the Adour; Freire's troops were ordered to Grenade and Cazères on the Adour north-west of Aire; and head-quarters were fixed on the 10th at Aire
Mar. 14. itself. On the 14th the Light Division was pushed on to Termes, and Picton's to Tarsac and Riscle; while Freire's was echeloned from Cazères to Barcelonne and St. Germé. Thus the army was disposed in two groups on each side of the road from Aire to Viella.

By the 8th Soult had realised that the Allies were stationary, but knew nothing of Beresford's march to Bordeaux. On the 12th, however, he was aware of this latter fact, and, having by reconnaissance ascertained the presence of the Allies at Garlin, Viella, Riscle, and Pouydraguin, he ordered his army to march northward to Conchez and Lembeye as if to make an attack. On
Mar. 13. the 13th the French infantry advanced as far as Diusse and a little beyond it, and their cavalry pressed up against the Allied outposts at three or four points between Viella and Garlin. Wellington, construing Soult's unwonted boldness to mean that he had been joined by ten thousand of Suchet's army, called in his outlying detachments and concentrated his troops about Aire. The bulk of them he placed in position behind the valley of the Lées, with the left at Aire, and the right about Garlin, keeping only the Hussar Brigade and the Light Division on the right bank of the Adour.
Mar. 14. Soult spent the whole of the 14th in feeble reconnaissance without daring to attempt more, remained
Mar. 16. stationary on the 15th, and on the 16th fell back slightly to southward, followed cautiously by the advanced parties of the Allies. Wellington, reckoning his enemy to be stronger than he actually was, reserved himself until he should be rejoined by the Fourth Division, which had been left behind to support Beresford in case of need.
Mar. 17. Soult continued to retire very slowly on the 16th and 17th. He had Napoleon's orders to keep the

field of action as near as possible to the Pyrenees, and fondly hoped that he was drawing his enemy southward. On the 17th he sent a small party of one hundred cavalry to Hagetmau, where they surprised and took a few officers and men, but caused not the slightest anxiety to Wellington.[1] The British Commander-in-Chief had on that day been rejoined by his outlying troops, which raised his force to some fifty thousand men; and on the 18th he marched southward in the direction of Vic-de-Bigorre. The advance was made in three columns; Hill's corps on the right being directed upon Conchez; Bock's cavalry, the Third, Sixth and Freire's Divisions in the centre upon Madiran; Somerset's cavalry, the Fourth and Light Divisions on the left upon Plaisance; while Ponsonby's cavalry, midway between these two last, moved upon Castelnau. Throughout the day Soult remained stationary in his positions between Simacourbe and Lembeye; and there was a small skirmish between his troops and those of Hill, a little to the north of the latter place. The Marshal cherished a vague hope of catching one or other of the Allied columns in isolation, and of falling upon it with his whole army; but, learning on the night of the 18th that Bock's dragoons and part of the Third Division had reached Moncaup, he began to suspect that Wellington designed to turn his right. In the course of the evening and night therefore he withdrew his troops eastward to a position on the east bank of the little river Laysa, between the forest of Labatut and the village of Lamayou, with their front to the north-west.

1814. Mar. 18.

On the morning of the 19th the left column of the Allies proceeded from Plaisance to Auriébat; the central column marched for Maubourget, with Ponsonby's brigade moving on its left by Caussade, and Freire's division on its right by Moncaup; and Hill turned south-eastward from Conchez upon Lembeye. Very soon Bock's dragoons came upon Berton's brigade of

Mar. 19.

[1] *Wellington Desp.* To Hope, 18th March 1814.

1814. Mar. 19. French horse near Maubourguet, and, though repulsed in their first attack, presently compelled Berton to retire south-eastward upon Rabastens. Thus the direct road to Vic-de-Bigorre was opened to the Allied cavalry; and Soult, suddenly awaking to the fact that the force thus debouching in the valley of the Adour was no isolated column but the main body of Wellington's army, hurried d'Erlon's two divisions to Vic-de Bigorre to hold the British in check, and ordered Clausel and Reille to march with all speed towards Tarbes.

D'Erlon, going ahead of his troops with his chief staff-officer, approached the main road just to north of Vic-de-Bigorre at about eleven o'clock, and to his amazement saw Bock's brigade before him. He summoned forward the leading battalions of Fririon's division,[1] at the double, deployed his skirmishers among the vines on either side of the road, unlimbered, as soon as he could, four guns in the road itself, and ordered Darmagnac's division to take post to his right rear, south of Vic-de-Bigorre, with its right flank resting on the Adour. In this position he received the attack of Picton's division until three o'clock; when, seeing the Light Division coming up the bank of the river by Artagnan, he withdrew Fririon's division, and left Darmagnac to continue the combat until nightfall. The struggle was obstinate,[2] for the country was exceedingly blind, and the French sharpshooters took full advantage of the shelter offered by hedges and enclosures. The Third Division, however, did not lose above two hundred and fifty men, British and Portuguese, few of whom were killed outright. The French losses were more serious; but d'Erlon was bound to make a firm stand in order to cover the retreat of Clausel and Reille upon Tarbes. The march of these two divisions was distressing, for the way lay over deep sand; but

[1] Formerly Foy's Division.

[2] See the accounts in Donaldson's *Eventful Life of a Soldier*; and in *Journal of an Officer of the Commissariat.*

the ground, being strongly enclosed, forbade the British cavalry to press them hard, and enabled so skilful a leader as Clausel to screen his movements effectually by rear-guards whose strength it was difficult for a pursuer to estimate. An English staff-officer, Captain Light, did indeed gallop from end to end of one such rear-guard, feigning to be wounded, and counted the battalions as he rode ; but this was an expedient which could only be employed once. Eventually three French divisions encamped in the plain of Ibos, immediately to west of Tarbes, while Taupin's came into Ger, some three miles west of Ibos, at midnight. D'Erlon's corps lay on the road to south of Vic-de-Bigorre with its advanced posts at Pujo. The outposts of the central column of the Allies were at Vic-de-Bigorre, and of the left column at Rabastens. 1814. Mar. 19.

Early on the morning of the 20th d'Erlon fell back upon Tarbes, stationing Darmagnac's division in the suburbs, and that of Fririon to east of it at Aureilhan on the road to Rabastens. In the night the corps of Reille and Clausel also had been set in motion towards the heights on the east of Tarbes. Soult had realised that he must retreat without delay upon Toulouse by Tournay and St. Gaudens ; and the artillery-park and provision-train were to proceed in advance of the army, the latter refilling its waggons on its way through Tarbes. At daybreak Reille's advanced cavalry reached Tarbes, and the divisions of Maransin and Taupin, presently passing through the town, took up their position on the heights of Piétat some three miles to south-east of it on the road to Tournay. Parties both of cavalry and infantry were posted at the edge of the suburbs of Tarbes on the roads to Pau and Vic-de-Bigorre ; and a battalion and a squadron with two guns occupied Aureilhan. When these dispositions were complete d'Erlon withdrew Darmagnac's division from the suburbs, and placed it together with Fririon's on the left of Reille above the village of Barbazan. Clausel's corps was stationed on the hills of Orleix and Mar. 20.

1814. Mar. 20. Oléac three or four miles north-east of Tarbes on the road to Rabastens; and Berton's brigade of cavalry came up in rear of it and reconnoitred north-eastward on the road to Trie. The whole of the French troops in position fronted more or less westward, on the flank of the line of the Allies' advance.

Wellington, meanwhile, under cover of night had massed his troops into two columns—Bock's cavalry, the Third Division and Hill's corps at Vic-de-Bigorre; and the Light Division, Hussar Brigade, Sixth Division and Ponsonby's cavalry at Rabastens; with Freire's Spaniards and the Fourth Division, which last was still far distant, following in rear. In the morning they marched south on both banks of the Adour, Hill deploying his corps about Tarbes, while the Light Division moved upon the hill immediately to south of Orleix, and the Sixth Division, together with the other components of the left column, struck out of the road upon Pouyastruc to turn Clausel's right. It was not until noon that the leading brigade—three battalions of the Ninety-fifth—of the Light Division came into action; and, since Soult was already resolved to retreat and had plenty of time for the movement, it is difficult to say why he accepted battle at all. However, he thought fit to fight a useless combat, and had carefully made his dispositions for resistance.

The hill of Orleix is a long, low bare ridge, of altitude varying from about eighty to two hundred feet, rising out of a level plain, which is broken by small enclosures and by deep ditches dug for purposes of irrigation. At its northern end stands Orleix, a neat little village, which runs for some distance up the slope. East of it and divided by half a mile of flat ground is the hill of Oléac, a much more formidable ridge fully three hundred feet in height. At the northern end of this range lies the village of Dours, three-quarters of the way up the ascent, the hill being low just at that point. The action began with the deployment of the three battalions of the Ninety-fifth

against the French skirmishers on the plain before Orleix hill. The enemy resisted stoutly, taking advantage of every shelter; but were gradually driven back upon their main body on the summit of the hill. The ascent was steep and covered in one place with a large patch of brushwood; and, on emerging from this, the riflemen found the mass of Harispe's division drawn up in tiers on the crest of the hill, the sharp gradient of the acclivity enabling them to fire over each other's heads. For some time the Ninety-fifth could make no headway, so heavy were the showers of grape and musketry; and two of the riflemen present declared that they had never taken part in so warm an affair except at Badajoz and Barrosa.[1] The accuracy of the rifles told, however; and Clausel dexterously withdrew his troops from ridge to ridge by Coussan in the direction of Tournay before the Sixth Division could outflank him. Hill's troops did not debouch from Tarbes until two o'clock, the townsfolk cheering the red-coats as they traversed the streets with shouts of "Vive le Roi." It was four o'clock before the main body crossed the summit of Piétat, by which time Reille and d'Erlon were retiring eastward upon Tournay, leaving Taupin's division to cover their retreat. The British artillery fired upon this rear-guard, and Bock's cavalry attempted to cut off Taupin's withdrawal by way of Mascaras, but was stopped by d'Erlon's artillery near Lhez on the right bank of the river l'Arret. At nightfall Hill's corps was at Angos and Mascaras, Picton's division being about a mile north of him at Calavanté and Lespouey; the Light Division was at Lansac and Laslades, about a mile north of Picton, and Clinton was at Coussan, from two to three miles north-east of Alten, but in touch with him by means of Somerset's and Ponsonby's brigades of cavalry. Freire halted in rear at Boulin and Sarrouilles. By ten o'clock Reille and d'Erlon had safely reached Tournay. 1814. Mar. 20.

The operations of the Allies failed decidedly on this

[1] Surtees and Costello.

1814. day, Wellington having realised too late—what Soult
Mar. 20. well knew—that the country was impassable by cavalry except on the roads. The casualties of the Allies did not exceed one hundred and fifteen, over ninety of which fell upon the Rifle Brigade. Those of the French were probably more numerous, but in any case the result of the action was to hasten Soult's retreat upon Toulouse. The shortest route from Tarbes was by Trie, Boulogne and Lombez ; but this he had sacrificed by waiting too long in his chosen position ; and he was compelled to take that by St. Gaudens. His army
Mar. 21. marched at three in the morning of the 21st on Montréjeau by Lannemezan, d'Erlon's corps leading and Reille's in rear ; while that of Clausel pursued a parallel march further to the north by Burg, striking into the same road at Pinas. D'Erlon on this day halted at St. Gaudens ; Reille at Villeneuve de Rivière and Bordes, and Clausel at Montréjeau. The Allies followed them ; Wellington's head-quarters being on the 21st at Tournay, while the head of Clinton's division on the same day reached Burg, and the head of Alten's Lannemezan.
Mar. 22. On the 22nd Wellington sent Hill's corps alone on the track of the enemy, with strict orders not to commit his troops to the attack of any considerable force in position; and he then set forward the bulk of the army in two columns; Clinton, Somerset and Ponsonby taking the road by Burg and Galan to Castelnau-Magnoac ; Alten and Bock that by Lannemezan and Monlong to Gaussan. The object was to arrive before Soult on the Garonne, while nourishing in him the delusion that the entire force of the Allies was at his heels.

The French, having been unmolested since the 20th, started late on the 22nd, the supply-train refilling its waggons with provisions as it passed through St. Gaudens, and cantoned for the night on the road between St. Martory and St. Elix. Towards four in the afternoon, two squadrons of the Thirteenth Light Dragoons surprised the 10th Chausseurs, who formed the extreme French rear-guard, close to St. Gaudens, charged them,

and drove them through the town, killing or capturing over one hundred of them with trifling loss to themselves. The fugitives brought Soult alarming reports that the whole of the British cavalry, as well as infantry and artillery, were before St. Gaudens; but reconnaissance had acquainted the Marshal with the march of a strong British column towards Castelnau-Magnoac; and, divining with little difficulty the plans of Wellington, he determined to arrive before him on the Garonne. 1814. Mar. 22.

On the 23rd the French army continued its march upon Toulouse with extreme speed, and at the sacrifice of all order. Since the 21st, when bad weather had set in, the *moral* of Soult's soldiers had steadily deteriorated, and stragglers and deserters had been multiplied. From one legion of National Guards, which hitherto had been staunch, only thirty men were left out of six hundred. The rear-guards and flank-guards of the cavalry were employed unceasingly in whipping up the laggards; and Soult, watching the columns march past him on the 23rd, was shocked at their wretched appearance. Nearly a third of the men were shoeless, about one-fifth of them were stragglers; and, had Toulouse been three days' march instead of one day's march distant, half the army would have reached it bare-footed. The head of the column, however, entered Muret, less than twelve miles from Toulouse, on this day; and Soult arrived at his destination untroubled, with many hours—one might say days—to spare. Wellington, indeed, had moved slowly and with great caution, spreading out his cavalry in all directions, and advancing under cover of it in three principal columns, the left of which, including head-quarters, reached St. Lys on the 26th, and there came in sight of the French army before Toulouse; while the main body of the right under Hill did not come up to Muret until the 27th. Mar. 23. Mar. 26.

Various causes are assigned for the tardiness of the British Commander in this pursuit. In the first place there was the weather, which was appalling. Heavy rain fell so continuously that all roads were knee-deep in mud

1814. and water; and at least one officer wondered whether the war would not be ended by such a deluge. When the men were in difficulties so great, the labour of bringing forward the pontoons for the passage of the Garonne, as well as a train of heavy artillery, may be imagined. Wellington's travelling carriage, with but one man inside it, stuck fast at one point of the road on the 26th, and was only extricated by the addition of four horses and six oxen to its own team of six mules. But such embarrassments as these were shared by the French and indeed contributed not a little to their demoralisation; and, since Wellington had expressly ordered Hill not to be too enterprising in his pursuit, the reasons for the British slow advance must be sought elsewhere.

The truth seems to be that Wellington was greatly hampered at this moment by ignorance of the general situation both in France and in Europe.[1] He had heard on the 22nd of the defeat of Napoleon at Laon; but there was a rumour that the Emperor had fallen back to Orléans, which might signify that he intended to join Soult, and to raise the whole country against the Allies in the south. The next tidings, of Napoleon's attack upon the Russian detachment at Rheims, also puzzled Wellington, and inclined him to doubt after all of the victory of Blücher at Laon. He was also totally in the dark as to the movements of Suchet. He had been apprised on the 16th that Suchet had made proposals to the Spanish Regency to withdraw the French garrisons from Barcelona, Tortosa, Peniscola and Murviedro; and he had written earnestly to deprecate the acceptance of any such offer, as tending to increase the strength of the French armies in the field. But on the 20th Wellington heard at Tarbes that the King of Spain had passed through Toulouse on his way to Catalonia; and, if this were

[1] "I have no late news from England." Wellington to Hope, 26th March 1814. Comparison of Bentinck's letter of 14th March (*Supp. Desp.* xiii. 649) with Wellington's letter to Bathurst of 7th April in *Wellington Desp.*, will show that on the latter day the letter of 14th March had not reached Wellington.

true, it was always possible that Suchet might intercept Ferdinand and extort from him the permission to relieve French garrisons before allowing him to proceed. William Clinton too thought it unsafe for the present to move his force away from Catalonia ; and, even if he had wished to do so, Bentinck had rendered such removal impossible by taking away all transports for his Italian expedition. 1814.

News from Bordeaux was likewise disquieting. The French troops, after a short panic, had reoccupied a fort at the mouth of the Gironde, and the British squadron was still unable to enter the river. The Duke of Angoulême, though expressly warned that the Allies could take no responsibility for the protection of the Bourbons, was crying out for money and for troops to put down the partisans of Bonaparte. Lastly Wellington's own army was very weak in British soldiers, and contained far too large a proportion of Spaniards. It was always difficult to prevent the latter from taking vengeance for the outrages perpetrated by the French in Spain ; and even the British were relapsing occasionally into their old vices—the men into that of plunder, and the officers into the appropriation, with either hire or purchase, of bullock-carts for their private baggage. If, therefore, Wellington had pressed his troops forward by forced marches, he would have filled the country with sick and stragglers who, even if they had not irritated the peasantry into hostility, would have fallen an easy prey to any organised rising. Add to these considerations the fact that Wellington's knowledge of the country and of the actual strength of Soult's army was very imperfect, and it must be acknowledged that he had good reason to keep his army united and in fresh condition. It may indeed be urged that the dispersion of Soult's army would have been the best guarantee for the safety of his own ; and there can be little doubt that, if Hill had pressed hard upon the retreating Marshal, such dispersion might have been in great measure effected. But the fortune of war is

1814. capricious; and even in the last days of the long contest the situation, as it presented itself to Wellington, was still such that he felt unwarranted in taking liberties or incurring hazards which might imperil all previous success.[1]

[1] *Wellington Desp.* To Bathurst, 18th, 20th, 25th March; to Admiral Penrose and Lord Dalhousie, 21st March; to Don P. Vallejo and H. Wellesley, 22nd March; to Lord C. Manners and General Order, 23rd March; to Sir H. Clinton, 24th March; to Duke of Angoulême, 29th March 1814.

CHAPTER XVII

WHILE the Allies were still fencing with Napoleon in Northern France, and Wellington was halted after his victory at Orthez, Graham had played an astonishingly bold game in Holland. Being condemned to inactivity after the failure of his second advance upon Antwerp, he sent Stanhope to Bernadotte's head-quarters at Cologne to ask for reinforcements. Bernadotte received this emissary with great friendliness and promised to order Walmoden's Hanoverian corps, which was cantoned on the left bank of the Elbe a little to west of Hamburg, to join Sir Thomas immediately. Being at such a distance these troops could not be expected for several days; and in the meanwhile Graham received a letter dated the 28th of February,[1] from Bathurst, intimating that in all probability his force would shortly be withdrawn and sent to America, owing to the failure of the Militia Act to produce recruits. Sir Thomas had already considered the feasibility of capturing Bergen-op-Zoom by surprise, but had rejected the operation as too dangerous, unless it were positively forced upon him. Existing circumstances, however, seemed to call for a great effort. The latest news from France announced the retreat of the Allies, and the latest instruction from England ordered the withdrawal of the British force. Unless Bergen-op-Zoom were taken, therefore, all Holland would be open

1814.

[1] Stanhope in his journal, which is partly reminiscent, says that he was charged to inform Bernadotte of the probable withdrawal of the British force: but dates seem to negative the possibility of this.

1814. Mar. to invasion ; whereas possession of the town would break the line of hostile fortifications between Antwerp and Flushing, ensure the possibility of naval co-operation for England, and in brief save the existence of Holland as an independent state. So Graham argued, not incorrectly, for ever since the sixteenth century Bergen-op-Zoom had been the bridge-head which gave the Dutch access to the continent of Europe, either through Brabant by land, or by Zeeland at sea, when they were strong, and, when they were weak, protected them against invasion.

The fortress itself, brought to perfection by Cohorn in 1688, in shape resembled a violin, the finger-board and half of the sound-board to west representing the port, and the rest of the sound-board to east the town. Town and port were almost joined together by walls and buildings, the communication between the two being a gate, known as the False Gate, in the ancient castle which stood in the middle of the aforesaid buildings. The place itself had sixteen bastions and three gates, the Breda Gate on the east side, the Antwerp Gate on the south side, and the Steenbergen Gate on the north side, besides twenty-six sally-ports—four of them spacious enough for the passage of vehicles, and the remainder also very large—which passed into the casemates and so into the ditches. The eastern and southern fronts were the strongest, being those that faced towards France ; and the latter was covered, over a considerable area, by an entrenched camp with four redoubts upon four salient angles, which were practically bastions. The whole of these works had been finished to the utmost nicety by Cohorn, saving only that the scarp was not revetted with masonry to a greater height than sixteen feet above the ditch, which defect, though of no importance against an attack in form, afforded dangerous facilities for an escalade.

On the western or water front the fortifications were wholly of earth, and the scarp, which had no counter-scarp, was of inclination so gentle that cavalry could

gallop up it in line. The true defence on this front consisted of a broad ditch within, holding six feet of water, and of a broad marsh without intersected with creeks, which, being covered with water at high tide, was impracticable for trench-making. North of this marsh was a narrow slip of reclaimed land between dykes and ditches, called the Little Polder, which ran westward from the north-west angle of the place, and ended in a fort called the Water-fort, standing in the midst of a wide ditch, likewise full of water, with steps leading down from it to the Scheldt. This work was revetted with masonry, but the scarp was not above twelve feet high. Beyond the Polder, and parallel to it on the north side, passed the canal known as the Zoom, which led to the port, and formed the communication between it and the river; and north of the canal a marsh, similar to that below the entrenched camp, extended to the Tholen dyke. This was an embankment which had been thrown up in the later half of the eighteenth century for the reclamation of land, and which abutted at right angles to the canal upon an earthern demi-bastion in the north-western angle of the fortress. The northern front was wholly of earth, with ditches full of water but without demi-lunes; the defence of this quarter being dependent upon a vast entrenched camp called the lines of Steenbergen which, together with other works, united the irregular quadrilateral formed by Steenbergen, Bergen-op-Zoom, Klundert and Willemstadt into one huge fortified position. 1814. Mar.

The general scheme of the defences, though well designed from a Dutch point of view—that is to say to resist an attack from the side of France—was by no means so well adapted to a French garrison, which might be threatened from any quarter. The lines of Steenbergen required a whole army for their defence, and no such army was to hand; indeed Steenbergen and Willemstadt were actually in the hands of the Allies. Again the entrance to the Water-fort, which was well placed for the reception of reinforcements from

1814. Mar. a nation which was mistress of the sea, was for a foreign garrison a weak point, which courted an assault by surprise. The French therefore moved this entrance back to the gorge of the bastion in rear, and endeavoured through the bitter winter of 1813–1814 to keep open the water, which was the main source of security on this front, by daily breaking of the ice. Frequently it was necessary to employ axes and even saws for this purpose, with enormous fatigue to the troops and anxiety to the officers. On the north front the want of demi-lunes was made good by retrenchment and by palisading of the re-entrant angles between the bastions; but, owing to the weakness of the garrison, it was impossible to occupy these retrenchments in proper strength. The troops, numbering two thousand seven hundred men,[1] were raw levies which, none the less, had improved greatly under the instruction of excellent officers; while the commandant, the veteran General Ambert, maintained both discipline and vigilance, and had taken every possible precaution against surprise.

In the first days of March Graham advanced his head-quarters to Calmpthout, and brought the cantonments of his right wing forward from Rozendaal to Putten and Stabroek, with the general idea of preventing the French from reinforcing Antwerp from Courtrai.

Mar. 7. On the 7th unfavourable news from all quarters prompted him to make his attack without delay. Of the operations of the Allied forces which were marching on Paris he knew nothing, except that Grand Head-quarters had fallen back to Chaumont, which suggested, to say the least, that affairs were not going favourably. Of his expected reinforcements under Walmoden the latest information was that they could not have drawn nearer to him than Bremen by the 26th of February, so that, in case of a French invasion of Flanders he

[1] 1 co. Artillery, 79; 1 co. Veteran gunners, 50; ½ co. miners, 42; sailors, 400; 1 batt. 12th Line, 600; 1 batt. 17th Line, 250; 1 batt. 21st Line, 274; 1 batt. 51st Line, 560; 6 companies Veterans, 390; odd units, 145; *Total, 2700.*

would have no troops to stand by him but the Saxons, 1814.
who, though brave enough, were imperfectly disciplined. In the circumstances Graham decided that, if he meant to attack Bergen-op-Zoom, he must do so forthwith, and accordingly he made his dispositions for an assault on the evening of the 8th, while the waters were still frozen and his intentions still unsuspected.

Before dawn of the 8th the First Division was Mar. 8.
moved quietly down to Halsteren and Huibergen, north-west and south-east of Bergen-op-Zoom; the Second Division being employed to cover the movement against any interruption from Antwerp. Four thousand men were then distributed into four columns, the leaders of which received the following instructions. On the right five hundred men of the Twenty-first, Thirty-seventh and Forty-fourth, supported by six hundred of the Royals, under Colonel Carleton of the Forty-fourth, were to march from Halsteren under cover of darkness so as to reach the junction of the Tholen dyke with the Scheldt at nine o'clock in the evening. From thence they were to be guided to their point of attack where the same dyke abuts on the fortress. On the right centre six hundred and fifty men of the Twenty-first, Thirty-seventh and Ninety-first—under Colonel Henry of the first-named regiment—were to deliver a feint assault on the Steenbergen Gate. On the left centre twelve hundred men of the Thirty-third, Fifty-fifth and Sixty-ninth, advancing from Huibergen under Colonel Morrice, were to assail the north-eastern angle near the Breda Gate; and on the extreme left a thousand of the Guards under Lord Proby were to move from Borguliet and attempt to force an entrance by the Orange bastion, in rear of the entrenched camp on the southern front. The four columns were directed to be within cannon-shot of the works by nine o'clock and to move to the attack at half-past ten; and three watches were set in each column to ensure accuracy of time. Perfect silence was of course to be observed up to the last moment; and it was arranged that the watchword

1814. Mar. 8. for the attacking parties should be "Oranje Boven," and the answer "God Save the King." Graham looked for help from confederates within the fortress,[1] and this system of watchwords was designed for their benefit. It was intended that the left centre attack should be the principal one, that the right and left attacks should concentrate upon it, and that Henry's column, after serving its purpose of diverting the enemy's attention by a false onslaught, should act as a reserve.

So far as human foresight could go, Graham had performed his part admirably; and the French, as they afterwards admitted, had not the slightest suspicion of the coming assault. Graham's subordinates, however, contrived to undo all his arrangements. Shortly after half-past nine, or nearly an hour before the appointed time, Henry's column entered the works near the Steenbergen Gate, surprised the guard at that point, and broke into the retrenchment that covered the gate. At the first sound of the shots the commandant of the French artillery rushed to the spot and discharged the guns that flanked this retrenchment from the east with his own hand; after which the fire of artillery and musketry became general on this part of the front. None the less a small party of Henry's soldiers contrived to make their way through the retrenchment, and, using their scaling-ladders to connect the two ends of the draw-bridge, passed over the ditch, escaladed the low revetment of the scarp, climbed over the superior slope and parapet, and reached the interior of the rampart. It should seem that nearly four hundred men altogether thus effected their entry into the fortress, but it does not appear that they were united in one body, for some of them were certainly overpowered and bayoneted; while the rear of the column, being blasted by a heavy fire of grape and musketry, was driven back in disorder with considerable loss.

[1] "There is no hope of taking Bergen-op-Zoom by *coup de main* without an understanding *within*, which I am trying to arrange." Graham to Bunbury, 1st March 1814.

It is evident that Colonel Henry, or his subordinates, entirely ignored Graham's instructions, not only as to the time of onset but as to the employment of the troops, which were not intended to incur serious danger except as a reserve in the last resort. As a diversion, however, Henry's action was completely successful, since it attracted the whole of the garrison to that quarter of the fortress. 1814. Mar. 8.

Meanwhile Carleton, whose force was accompanied by Generals Gore and Skerrett, realising from the sound of musketry that the assault had been prematurely begun, judged it best—and probably with correctness—to fall on without delay. The tide was not indeed so low as it would have been an hour later, but a few inches more or less of water in the ditch could make little difference. Advancing along the Tholen dyke Carleton's soldiers followed it almost to the cross-dyke at its end, where, turning to their right along the foot of the glacis, they crossed the Zoom and reached the basin of the port almost unresisted. A gunboat moored to command the passage, and two guns mounted for the same object, were abandoned by the enemy without firing a shot; and all would have gone well but for the heedlessness of the commanders, who appear to have lost their heads in the apparent certainty of success. Carleton exultingly shouting "First in Badajoz, first in Bergen-op-Zoom," turned southward along the gorge of the bastions that flanked the water-gate, with about two hundred and fifty men at his heels; and Skerrett, who throughout the advance had been crying out, "Remember, men, you are to get out of that ditch to your right," himself led the tail of the column to the left, and taking the two bastions at the western extremity of the northern front in reverse, made himself master of them with little difficulty. The Royals, six hundred strong, were left at the Water-gate without orders, and unfortunately under command of an officer who could not be trusted to act upon his own initiative.

The French Governor, who was in the central square

1814. Mar. 8. of the town surrounded by his reserves, had hardly learned of the repulse of Henry's attack, when he was apprised of the successful entry of the assailants into the port. Losing his head for the moment, he ordered the whole of the troops with him, chiefly sailors and veterans, to hasten at the double to the port with several field-guns ; and in a few minutes he had thrown practically his last man into one section of the fight. Hardly had these reserves reached the port, when loud shouts of "Oranje Boven" were heard from the quarter of the Antwerp Gate. Carleton, leaving a few troops to guard the quays, had pushed on along the ramparts of the western and southern fronts, had assailed the whole of the French guards in flank, killing a few, taking a larger number prisoners, and driving the rest before him to the Antwerp Gate. Here he seized the guard-house of the gate, leaving detachments to lower the draw-bridge and to hold the mouth of the street which debouched into the town. He then continued his progress, which was little opposed, almost to the Breda Gate, just south of which he encountered the 12th Line drawn up in firm array to meet him. Having dropped many detachments from his handful of men to secure important points and to guard prisoners, Carleton can hardly have had a hundred soldiers left with him, but he rode up to the enemy with perfect assurance, calling to them to lay down their arms, and was at once shot dead, as was also the greater part of his following.

His confidence was not so ill timed as might at first sight appear, for Morrice's column should by this time have been near the Breda Gate. But here the fortune of war intervened. For some inexplicable reason Morrice's men were seized at the critical moment with one of those panics to which the best of troops are subject during a night attack, turned about before a shot had been fired at them, and fled in all directions. Graham and the whole of his staff were galloping among them for some time before they could

be rallied, and in the meantime Carleton's men were overpowered, and Gore was fain to withdraw the wreck of his column to the bastion immediately to east of the Antwerp Gate. 1814. Mar. 8.

Shortly afterwards the fourth column under Lord Proby and General Cooke came into action. The Guards, pursuant to the original intention, had moved to the foot of the glacis between the entrenched camp and the port, but, finding the ice broken and impassable, they returned and, passing between the two westernmost works of the entrenched camp, made for the Orange bastion, which was the dividing point between the revetted and unrevetted portions of the southern front. Arriving before it they calmly descended by ten ladders into the ditch, reascended the scarp on the further side, and took possession of the bastion, not however without suffering the loss of several men from the fire of the French. Cooke then threw his main body into the houses overlooking the quays of the port, and, keeping up a heavy fusillade upon the enemy in that quarter, sent out a strong patrol towards Skerrett on the one side, and a detachment of the First Guards under Lieutenant-colonel Clifton towards the Antwerp Gate on the other.

It was now some minutes past eleven o'clock, and the fate of Bergen-op-Zoom still hung in the balance. Of the four columns of attack two and a part of a third had succeeded in entering the fortress. Skerrett with one weak detachment was in occupation of the arsenal and of the northern portion of the port, and had pushed parties eastward along the north front towards the Steenbergen Gate. Scattered bodies of Henry's column were also somewhere in the vicinity of that gate. The Royals held the Water-gate. Cooke was master of all the roads south of the basin of the port, and was pouring in a deadly fire upon the French in the streets. Finally, Gore, with a remnant of beaten and discouraged men, still occupied the bastion immediately to eastward of the Antwerp Gate. The French

1814. Mar. 8. retained no more than six bastions out of sixteen; namely, the one immediately on the west, and the five immediately to the east of the Steenbergen Gate. The heavy guns of these six poured a terrific tempest of grape along their entire front; and the French field-guns swept the streets and quays with a fire against which no troops could stand. There was fierce fighting about Skerrett's most advanced posts and near the Antwerp Gate, with isolated contests between small bodies of men at a score of points; and at one moment the bulk of the French came running back to the central square with loud cries that their ammunition was exhausted. The occasion was critical and might easily have led to a panic, for the arsenal and nineteen out of twenty-two magazines, not to mention the keys of the other three, were in the hands of the assailants. But the French officers with admirable coolness rallied their soldiers; the chief engineer served out axes; the doors of the three remaining magazines were broken down; and the French returned to their comrades laden with cartridges and inspired with fresh hope for the renewal of the combat.

The issue lay with Morrice's column and with the Royals. Morrice's soldiers had recovered themselves and made for the lock of the inundation at the north-eastern corner of the place, but found their progress barred by broken ice, and, being tormented by a cross-fire from the bastions upon either flank, were compelled to retire with the loss of some two hundred men killed and wounded. Thus the eastern half of the fortress was left free of assailants upon all sides. The detachments dropped by Carleton at the Antwerp Gate were also driven back before they could lower the drawbridge; and a party of French, having brought up a field-gun, seemed likely to cut off and destroy not only these soldiers but also the relics of Gore's force, which had fallen back upon them. In the nick of time, however, Clifton came upon the scene with his little body of Guards, who captured the French field-gun

out of hand, fired a volley, and, charging with the bayonet, drove the enemy back to the Antwerp Gate. 1814. Mar. 8-9.

The French fled in panic, and the Guards, together with Gore's party, followed them in hot pursuit to the central square. The fugitives were almost driven from the square itself, possession of which would have made the British masters of the town, when a party of fifty or sixty gens-d'armes, who were formed in line before the main guard, came forward to stop the rush to the rear. Thereupon the flying French speedily rallied and formed themselves into a dense and irregular mass across the street. Packed too closely to load or fire their arms, the French swarmed forward upon the British and recaptured their lost gun, but were borne back in turn by their opponents and yielded the trophy once more. For some time the combat surged backwards and forwards, the gun changing owners more than once, though neither party had time to fire it; but gradually weight and numbers told. Gore and several other officers were killed, and when at length Clifton also fell, the British gave way and fled to the Orange bastion with the French in hot chase at their heels.

In the meantime Skerrett also had been sharply engaged. The French guard, which he had driven out of the bastion at the north-western angle, rallied upon a picquet of three hundred men in the next bastion to eastward, and established itself there in a building known as the new powder-magazine. The British for their part seized a windmill in a still more commanding position within the same bastion; and the fighting became exceedingly lively. Despite of inferior numbers the British gained the advantage, and the French had actually turned their backs, when four hundred French sailors together with three field-guns came up to reinforce them, and enabled them to rally. The combat was fiercely maintained for a time. Skerrett was mortally wounded and the leader of the French sailors was killed; but after a sharp struggle and many vicissitudes of fortune the windmill was finally stormed by

1814. Mar. 8-9. the enemy, and the British were driven back to the north-western bastion.

Throughout this time Cooke had remained stationary in painful suspense. Clifton, upon his first arrival at the Antwerp Gate, had reported that he could not open it owing to the fire of the French from the street on the side of the town, but that, even if opened, the gate was useless, since a demi-lune commanding the access to it from without was still in the occupation of the enemy. After this brief message no further communication had arrived from Clifton, and Cooke accordingly gave up his detachment for lost, but after a time sent Lieutenant-colonel Rooke of the Third Guards with a small party towards the Antwerp Gate. As it happened, Rooke had hardly started when he was met by the French who were pursuing the fugitives from Clifton's and Gore's detachments. Harried by the fire of the Third Guards in front and of the rest of the brigade from the houses on the right flank, the enemy turned back in disorder; and Rooke chasing them beyond the Antwerp Gate ascertained that the demi-lune before it was still occupied by the French, and that consequently no entrance by that way was possible. Graham, however, after the failure of the attack on the north-eastern angle, had withdrawn Morrice's troops, and sent them round by the route which Proby had taken to the Orange bastion. Here they entered the fortress with perfect ease and safety, and joined Cooke; but in the existing state of uncertainty Cooke decided not to weaken his force by attempting to seize points which he could not maintain, and by traversing streets where he might suffer heavy loss. Graham at the same time sent orders for Henry's column also to march to this spot; but since Henry had converted his feint attack into a real attack and his reserve into a storming party, there were only about one hundred and fifty men left to him, and these Graham eventually judged it better to keep under his own eye. Shortly after one o'clock the firing died away; and the senior officers of the Artillery and Engineers made

their official report to Graham that the place was in his possession. The General accordingly ordered up six hundred more of the Guards from Putten and Wow, besides three hundred and fifty men of the Thirty-fifth; all of which added to the remains of Henry's column and to a few of the Fifty-fifth which Graham had kept by him, made up a total force of thirteen hundred men. For five or six hours Sir Thomas never doubted but that he was master of Bergen-op-Zoom. 1814. Mar. 9.

Nor was he without some ground for his belief. Cooke had still under his command over two thousand men of Proby's, Morrice's and Carleton's columns, including the six hundred of the Royals, which had hardly been engaged. Moreover, though the French had recovered nearly three-quarters of the ramparts as well as three of the gates, and had taken a number of prisoners over and above those of the British who had been killed, they had been very roughly handled in their contest with Cooke in the southern quarter of the port. They had in fact been practically driven from it; some of them escaping by the False Gate, where they unlimbered three guns to bar the entrance into the town and to enfilade the passage to the northern quarter of the port; others crossing the basin by the draw-bridge, which they raised behind them to prevent pursuit. Moreover, though both Cooke and Graham were unaware of it, there was still a considerable number of British in the two bastions adjoining the arsenal at the north-western angle, and a great many of Henry's column were hidden away in the vicinity of the Steenbergen Gate. But all of these were cut off from Cooke by the rising of the tide in the basin of the port.

It seems to have been at about three o'clock on a clear moonlit morning that the fire recommenced, the French making a determined attempt to drive the remains of Skerrett's column from the two north-western bastions. The British at this point displayed the greatest tenacity and intelligence in defending themselves. There was by chance in the more easterly of

1814. Mar. 9. the two bastions a huge pile of palisades, which had not been utilised in consequence of the frost. These the British employed to form a rampart flanking the gorge of the bastion; while at the same time they turned round the heavy guns, which had been mounted to enfilade the Tholen dyke, so as to command the entrance to the gorge. In vain the French attempted again and again to penetrate into the bastion under the fire of their field-guns: the storm of grape on their front and the murderous shower of musketry from behind the palisades on their flank drove them back always with heavy loss. Indeed had not the aim of the heavy guns been uncertain, owing to the difficulty of working them, reversed, upon their platforms, the French columns would have been annihilated. On the other hand any counter-attack by the British was out of the question; and the two parties remained separated by a dividing line about midway between the arsenal and the windmill, which neither was able to pass.

In the southern quarter of the port there was a similar dead-lock. All French attempts to reach the Orange bastion by the ramparts on the east side of it were frustrated by the flanking fire of the Guards in the houses; and equally all efforts of the British to penetrate by the False Gate and its parallel passages into the town were paralysed by the fire of the French field-guns at the gate. By the confession of the French themselves it needed the utmost exertions of their artillery to prevent the British from forming on the quays and storming the False Gate out of hand; but the brave French gunners were equal to the occasion and kept the Guards confined to their shelter. Within the town half a dozen British soldiers had contrived to get into a house in the street leading to the Antwerp Gate, from which they kept up a continual fire upon all passing troops; and on the other side French marksmen on the ramparts[1] harassed the Guards with an

[1] Cooke says that these "snipers" were in houses, but this is denied by Legrand.

incessant fusillade which caused not a little loss. The contending parties were in fact almost exactly equal in strength, and both in a manner committed to disjointed and incoherent action, the British because they were actually separated into two distinct bodies, the French because they blindly accepted the initiative thrust upon them by their enemies. Hence the contest was strangely intermittent. For half an hour there would be thunder of guns, clatter of musketry, furious shouting and all the hideous clamour of war; then suddenly an interval of profound silence with the moon riding softly overhead, as though perfect peace reigned in Bergen-op-Zoom. 1814. Mar. 9.

It was in the course of such a lull between half-past two and three o'clock in the morning that one of the French colonels, after a general reconnaissance, represented to Ambert that it was hopeless to look for success from partial attacks, and that the troops should be concentrated for a general onslaught. More than half of the garrison were still occupying the works at the eastern end of the fortress from the Steenbergen Gate to the Antwerp Gate, to which quarter they had been sent at the opening of the assault, but where they were now absolutely useless. Ambert readily accepted this advice, and ordered his troops to be divided into three columns, of which that on the right, or northern side, should advance first and give the signal for those in the centre and left to advance likewise. The head of the right column was formed of the 51st of the line, followed in succession by the 17th and 12th, and it was agreed that these should move with the bayonet from the vicinity of the windmill into the north-west bastion, while a party of sailors should slip along the edge of the scarp so as to turn the rear of the British who were ensconced behind the palisades.

This plan was completely successful. The British on the northern front, assailed both in front and rear, gave way instantly and fled for refuge to the basin of the port or to the main ditches. The rear of the French column

1814. Mar. 9. with three field-guns then turned to the left, drove the British from the arsenal, and crossing the basin of the port on a small swing-bridge little more than a foot wide, in defiance of the fire of the Guards from the houses on the south side of the basin, drove the fugitives before them to the Water-gate. The drawbridge from this gate over the broad ditch had not been lowered, there being no occasion to use it; and the flying red-coats, unable to pass, jumped down into the ditch as best they could. Some reached the glacis, where the cannon of the western front played on them with grape; but many more were captured by the French, who let down scaling-ladders to save them. A large number of those thus taken were wounded, and all were wet through to the arm-pits and numbed with cold.

Upon the approach of the French to the Water-gate Colonel Muller of the Royals sent an urgent message to Cooke for help, whereupon Cooke reinforced him with the Thirty-third. He would have done better to summon the Royals to join his own party, for an officer who had remained supine for six hours without attempting to move during a strenuous fight, as had Muller, should not have been trusted with more troops. Moreover, Cooke had some idea himself of taking the offensive, and, on the commencement of the French counter-attack, had asked Graham for instructions whether to clear the streets or only to hold the ramparts. Graham's answer left Cooke discretion to do as he might think best, but promised reinforcements after daybreak. The messenger, however, did not reach Cooke until too late. Meanwhile the French brought up their field-guns to play upon the Royals, who, according to Muller's account, suffered so heavily from the showers of grape that he was compelled to surrender. It is, however, evident that he made no great effort, for the number of his killed and wounded was under one hundred and twenty, whereas that of the men taken unhurt exceeded five hundred. The Thirty-

third, which was of about the same strength as the Royals, declined to share their fate, but scrambled over the ramparts and returned to Graham, leaving behind them over one hundred slain and disabled, but only fifty unwounded prisoners. 1814. March 9.

Thus the French on the right were completely successful; but in the centre and left their efforts were at the outset fruitless. The central column, attempting to debouch as before from the False Gate, durst not face the fire of the Guards in front and flank, and could do no more than sweep the quays and streets with grape to keep the British from leaving the houses. The left column, led by the 21st, and backed by a heterogeneous collection of sailors, veterans and gunners, likewise tried to penetrate into the Orange bastion; but, being greeted not only by a terrible shower of musketry but by grape from their own guns, which the British had turned against them, they were driven back with heavy loss. They held, however, the bastion immediately to east of the Orange bastion, thus cutting off Cooke's communications with the exterior, and it was necessary to thrust them out of it, a feat which was performed by the Fifty-fifth and Sixty-ninth —the very troops that had succumbed to panic earlier in the night—in the most brilliant style.

Still Cooke's position was extremely anxious. He could see that matters were going amiss all round him, though he knew nothing definite; and the French in the north-west bastion now turned their heavy cannon upon him from the opposite side of the port. Lord Proby suggested that a part of the troops should withdraw, and a considerable number of them retired in good order, using the ladders by which they had entered. The French left column attempted a second attack during this movement, but was again repulsed by the Fifty-fifth and Sixty-ninth; and it seems that the retreat was unmolested except by the fire from the demi-lune before the Antwerp Gate, the garrison of which poured a steady stream of shot upon the British as they crossed

1814. the glacis. Nevertheless the remanent of Cooke's force,
March 9. chiefly men of the First Guards, still held their own; though the batteries in the north-west bastion were plying them steadily with shell, the French right column were now assailing them from the side of the Water-gate, and the central column was preparing combustibles to kindle the entire southern quarter of the port. At this juncture, however, Colonel Jones of the Guards, who had been taken prisoner, judging from the reports of his fellow-prisoners from all quarters that further effort was hopeless, volunteered to stop what he termed useless butchery. Ambert accepted the offer on the condition that all British within the walls should surrender; and Jones, taking the arm of Captain Denis of the French artillery, walked down with him slowly between the two fires of the contending parties, both officers waving white handkerchiefs, until with some difficulty the fight was stopped. Cooke, learning from Jones of the surrender of Muller and of the defeat of Clifton's, Skerrett's and Carleton's detachments, then consented that his men should lay down their arms; and Graham, moving down with his reinforcements an hour or two later to take possession of the town, saw to his infinite mortification that he had come in vain.

Thus failed the assault upon Bergen-op-Zoom, one of the most singular in its details to be found in the annals of war. The attempt was perfectly justified by circumstances; the idea was bold; and the initial combinations, as the event sufficiently proved, were perfect. Over three thousand men were thrown into the fortress with little effort; and yet these, though they fought with uncommon courage and tenacity, were vanquished by a heterogeneous garrison of twenty-seven hundred. This remarkable result was due chiefly to three causes: first, to Colonel Henry's squandering of his troops in a real attack, which according to Graham's plan should only have been a feint; secondly, to Skerrett's blunder in leading his men along the northern instead of the southern ramparts, and thus

failing to join his force to that of Carleton and Cooke ; thirdly, and chiefly, to the helpless imbecility of Colonel Muller, who, instead of opening communications with Skerrett on one side and with Cooke on the other, so as to throw his reserve in with decisive effect, kept the Royals useless and inactive at the Water-gate for six hours, and then without any sufficient warrant surrendered them as prisoners. Henry and Skerrett acted in violation of Graham's orders, but Muller in violation of the simplest duty of an officer, disgracing not only himself but the noble regiment with which he was unworthy to serve. Yet even these faults might possibly have been made good, had Carleton and Gore, instead of pursuing the enemy along the whole length of the southern front, halted their men at the Antwerp Gate, and driven the French from the demi-lune that covered and secured this entrance to the fortress. The whole of the assailants could then have been assembled to capture the Antwerp Gate, and make their way from thence over a very short distance to the central square. 1814. March.

Graham's troops, it will be remembered, were of poor quality, both officers and men, and may be pardoned for doing their work without intelligence ; but Skerrett and Carleton were fresh from the Peninsula and should have shown better judgment. Graham summarised their attack and failure in a fashion which was picturesque even if not quite accurate. "The right column went on like a pack of fox-hounds into cover, and in all directions, and were annihilated before the Guards got in." Cooke, whom we have known in earlier days at Cadiz, made excellent dispositions for himself, but showed some weakness in withdrawing his troops before daylight, for he must have known that Graham would not fail to reinforce him. Altogether it should seem that Graham alone emerges from this unfortunate business with credit ; and it was hard upon him that so brilliant a stroke—for such the attack undoubtedly was —should have been paralysed by the defects and the negligence of his subordinate officers. Still, though

1814. March. unstinted praise may be meted out to Graham, too much censure should not be visited on his inferiors, for the entire operation took the most unexpected turns. The French knew the weakness of the fortress in a frost, foresaw the possibility of a *coup de main*, and were in the highest degree vigilant and alert to avert it. Nevertheless the frost, as the event proved, was a hindrance rather than a help to the assailants; for Morrice's column owed its repulse to broken ice, and Cooke's was turned away from its true point of attack by the same cause. For all the part played by ice in the struggle, the assault might just as well have been delivered in a thaw. Yet never was a garrison so completely taken by surprise as that of Bergen-op-Zoom. Next, the preliminary panic in Morrice's column was a piece of sheer bad luck, for these same troops behaved most nobly later under the command of Cooke. On the other hand the defence of the north-west bastion would have honoured veterans of the Peninsula for its stubbornness and resource, showing that in some corps at any rate there were good heads among the officers.

To turn now to the French, it must be said at once that it was greatly to the discredit of the guards in the redoubts of the entrenched camp that Cooke should have been able to escalade the Orange bastion without so much as the raising of an alarm. The supreme command also seems to have been in feeble hands, otherwise the bulk of the garrison would never have been kept on the eastern front, where it was useless, after the failure of Henry's and Morrice's attacks. The battalion-commanders, on the contrary, were excellent; and it was owing to their energy that the fortress was saved. But the whole story is made up of such a concourse of fortuitous accidents that it is difficult to assign praise or blame to either side. The splendid audacity of Graham's conception shines out alone with brilliancy undimmed.

The losses of the British in this affair amounted to twenty-five hundred and fifty; the killed amounting to

nearly four hundred, the wounded to over five hundred, and the unwounded prisoners to over sixteen hundred. The Forty-fourth, of Carleton's column, was the regiment which, in proportion to its strength, suffered most heavily, its killed and wounded numbering over two hundred out of three hundred and fifty engaged. The Twenty-first and Thirty-seventh of the same column were likewise severely punished, as also was the Thirty-third, which appears to have borne the brunt of Morrice's unsuccessful assault. The Guards escaped comparatively lightly, and this bears witness to the skill with which they were disposed by Cooke; for there were only three hundred and fifty of them unwounded at the final surrender, and yet no efforts of the French infantry could dislodge them. The French losses are stated, probably with correctness, at five hundred killed and wounded, so that their triumph was complete. Four colours, including one belonging to the First Guards, fell into their hands; and they had every reason to plume themselves upon their success. 1814. March.

Never did victors behave more generously to vanquished than on this occasion. The British officers were breaking their swords in fury, declaring that no such disaster had ever before befallen the British army; and the condition of the wounded, covered with blood and soaked to the skin with icy water, was pitiable. The French general, Bizanet, treated the whole of them with equal magnanimity, restoring to the officers their swords and allowing them to lodge in hotels, while giving every care and attention to the men. Bizanet had, as he said, been himself a prisoner of the English in his youth, and had received such kindness from them that he took pleasure now in repaying it. When Colonel Stanhope, of Graham's staff, came to negotiate for exchange of prisoners, Bizanet declined to look at any papers that he collected or to set any watch upon his actions. The General also invited Stanhope to dine with him, and proposed the health of Graham as a compliment to so brave and able a commander. Finally he signed an

1814. March. agreement for the release of the prisoners, on condition that they should not serve against France or her Allies in Europe until regularly exchanged. The prisoners accordingly marched out on the 10th, fully at liberty to fight against the Americans, which, as Stanhope knew, was the duty already assigned to them by the British Government. Thus fifteen hundred men were regained practically without exchange; and although it was doubtless a great object to the French to be quit of so many useless mouths, some credit must be given to the skilful diplomacy of Stanhope. On the 11th this officer sailed for England with the evil tidings of failure; though the event rightly brought praise rather than blame to Graham. Bathurst and the Duke of York expressed their high approval of his spirit and enterprise, and the Prince Regent broke through all precedent to give Stanhope a step in rank, as though he had brought home the report not of a defeat but of a victory.[1]

With his force reduced by nearly one half Graham was powerless; but the news of Blücher's success at Laon, which reached him on the 14th of March, set much of his anxiety at rest. A week later Walmoden sent word that he should arrive at Lierre and Malines on the 25th or 26th with his first detachment of Hanoverians; but, as this body of troops did not exceed five thousand men, it seemed likely that Graham would be condemned to long inactivity before he could hope to take the field. Some effort was made to collect sufficient men from Dutch levies and Prussian regiments to prosecute the siege of Antwerp; and the preparations were still going forward[2] when happily circumstances rendered any fresh campaign unnecessary.

On the 29th the Allied armies came before Paris,

[1] This account of the assault is drawn from Graham's letters in the Record Office, W.O. 7, vols. 197-201, most of which are printed in Delavoye's *Life of Lord Lynedoch*; from James Stanhope's MS. *Journal* and from Legrand's *Relation de la Surprise de Bergen-op-Zoom*, Paris, 1816, which from the French side is most valuable.

[2] Castlereagh, *Desp.* ix. 383-393, 406, 425-426, 444-348.

and on the 30th engaged Marmont in battle under the walls. Joseph Bonaparte, who was acting as lieutenant to the Emperor during Napoleon's absence in the field, fled southward early in the day, after empowering Marmont to parley with the enemy; and on the night of the 30th the capitulation of Paris was signed, Marmont undertaking to withdraw his troops outside the fortifications. In the late hours of the same night the news reached Napoleon, who was hurrying back in frantic haste from his false movement to the eastward, and had already passed Fontainebleau. He sent messengers on in the hope of breaking off the negotiations, but, finding that he was too late, went back to Fontainebleau overpowered by his evil fortune. On the 31st the Allied armies entered Paris, where, all danger being over, they were welcomed as liberators; but the city gave no sign of its feelings as to a change of Government. There was in fact no public opinion; and it was necessary to improvise one favourable to the views of the Allied Sovereigns. Talleyrand was sent for, and was the more readily found since he had stayed at Paris to await this very opportunity. He pronounced in favour of a restoration of the Bourbons, and suggested that the Senate should declare the Emperor dethroned. Thereupon a declaration was drawn up to the effect that the Allied Sovereigns would treat no more with Napoleon, and invited the Senate to nominate a provisional government, which should prepare a new constitution. In the evening Talleyrand spoke with the most prominent members of the Senate and drew up the list of the members of the provisional government, not omitting his own name. On the afternoon of the 1st of April sixty-four senators out of one hundred and fifty met and appointed Tallyrand's nominees without discussion; and on the 3rd the same body, after short consideration of a long preamble setting forth the iniquities of Napoleon, unanimously declared that he had ceased to reign.

1814. Mar. 30. Mar. 31. April 3.

All this was very well; but Napoleon was not a man

1814. to be bound by votes, least of all when he had an army
April 3. of sixty thousand men at his back; and the Allies were well aware of it. Their obvious course would have been to march straight upon Fontainebleau on the 1st of April and crush the few troops that had been able to overtake the Emperor, before the rest should come up; but the Tsar wished to end the war without further bloodshed, and without risking the chance of disaster from a possible defeat. There remained, therefore, only two possibilities: to alienate Napoleon's army from him, or, in default, to kidnap Napoleon himself. Plans were laid to compass both objects, but precedence was given to the former. Talleyrand and his followers had from the first moment set themselves to convert Marmont to their views; and on the 3rd of April the Marshal received letters from them and from Schwarzenberg, enclosing the act of dethronement, and appealing to him as a good patriot to range himself on the side of "the good cause."

The path which a good patriot should, in the circumstances, have taken is a point upon which men will argue for ever without possibility of agreement. On the one side Marmont had from very early days been attached to the fortunes of Napoleon, and owed his great position to him. On the other it was unquestionable that this same Napoleon, who had been the saviour of France in 1799, had brought about her ruin between 1807 and 1814, and was responsible for the occupation of Paris by the Allied armies at that moment. Being something of a coxcomb, Marmont may have aspired to play the part of Monk. Being far remote from a fool, he may reasonably have thought it his duty to cut matters short. The overthrow of Napoleon could only be a matter of time, for there was Wellington to be reckoned with in the south, as well as the Allies in the north; and prolongation of resistance could only mean additional misery to France and worse terms in the end both for her and for Napoleon. Whatever his motives, the

Marshal agreed to withdraw his troops from Napoleon's army upon two conditions: that he should be free to lead them to Normandy with arms, ammunition and baggage, and that if, in consequence, Napoleon should fall into the hands of the Allies, there should be guaranteed to the Emperor his life and liberty within some territory to be agreed upon between the French Government and the Allied powers. Schwarzenberg gladly accepted the terms; and on the morning of the 4th a convention to that effect was signed. 1814. April 3. April 4.

At about the same time Macdonald with the three corps under his command was approaching Fontainebleau; and Napoleon, having his troops thus concentrated under his hand, had given the order for a general advance. Nothing was yet known at his head-quarters of Marmont's defection; but the news of the decree of dethronement had reached the army, and had wrought not a little on the senior officers, who were sick of war and had learned to distrust the ambition of their chief. At noon the Emperor, as was his custom, attended the ceremony of mounting guard. The men showed their usual enthusiasm, but the marshals and generals formed a sulky group aside; and, when the parade was over, Ney, Lefebvre and Moncey invaded Napoleon's room, and in no very polite terms pressed him to abdicate. High words followed, but the Emperor was borne down; and he at length consented to abdicate without prejudice to the rights of his son. Accordingly Ney, Macdonald and Caulaincourt were despatched to convey his determination to Schwarzenberg's head-quarters; and the three of them, picking up Marmont on their way, were admitted to the Tsar's presence soon after midnight. They pleaded the cause of the Napoleonic dynasty with such eloquence and sincerity that Alexander was for the moment shaken, and bade them return at nine o'clock to hear his final decision. But meanwhile a singular fatality had altered the whole situation. Napoleon in the course of the 4th sent word to Marmont and to all corps-commanders to

1814. repair to head-quarters. Souham, who was in charge
April 4. of Marmont's troops during the Marshal's absence, inferred from this summons that the Emperor had learned the secret of Marmont's defection, to which Souham and other of his officers were privy ; and in order (as he thought) to save his head, Souham informed Schwarzenberg that he should lead his force into the lines of the Allies. This he actually did in the course of the night. The Tsar, having thus eleven thousand out of Napoleon's sixty thousand soldiers in his power, rejected the abdication in favour of the King of Rome, and insisted upon abdication unconditionally.

The news of Souham's action reached the Emperor
April 5. early in the morning of the 5th, and caused him to cancel his orders for an advance, and to issue others for retreat to the Loire. Late in the evening Ney, Macdonald and Caulaincourt arrived at Fontainebleau and reported the result of their mission, declaring that the Allies were about to restore the Bourbons and would guarantee to Napoleon the sovereignty of Elba. The Emperor answered that in such circumstances war was no greater an evil than peace, and unfolded his plans for retreat to the Loire and for co-operation with the armies of Soult, Suchet and Augereau. The Marshals listened in icy silence and withdrew. In the evening they held a meeting, as the result of which Ney, Macdonald and Caulaincourt directed Berthier next day to transmit no further orders which Napoleon might issue for the movements of troops. Napoleon made a last appeal to them, but in vain ; and he then signed the abdication of the thrones of France and Italy on behalf of himself and his heirs. His officers hastened to make their peace with Lewis the Eighteenth ; but the men, less easily reconciled to the change, showed their resentment by spasmodic outbursts of insubordination. Anxious to have done with the trouble, the Allies now stated their final terms to Napoleon ; that he was to have the island of Elba, and his wife the duchies of Parma, Placentia and Guastalla, together

with an annual subsidy of £80,000 between them. On 1814.
the night after hearing these terms Napoleon attempted April.
to poison himself; but on recovering, regained composure and accepted his fate. On the 20th he took leave of his Guard and set out for Fréjus. Acclaimed with the old enthusiasm on his journey as far as Lyons, he found a very different spirit reigning in the south, where he was fain to disguise himself to escape insult and violence from the people. On the 28th he set sail from Fréjus in the British frigate *Undaunted*; and his reign for the present was over.

CHAPTER XVIII

1814. THE news of the great event took long to reach the most distant theatres of operations. In Sicily Bentinck, after active negotiation with Murat and with Bellegarde, the Austrian commander in Italy, throughout the month of February, had embarked his first division of troops at Palermo under General Montresor.[1] Murat, who had lately occupied Tuscany, wished them to be landed at Spezia; but Bentinck, distrusting Murat and conceiving that he desired only to keep the British troops at a distance, decided to send them to Leghorn, and to demand exclusive possession of that port. The First Division sailed accordingly, disembarked at Leghorn on
Mar. 10. the 10th of March, and sent back its transports to fetch the Second Division; while Bentinck, who had already despatched an emissary to Bellegarde to beg him for some cavalry, made his way to Verona to visit that commander in person. He was greatly disappointed

[1] Return of troops embarked for Italy. Feb. 1814.
1st Division. Montresor. Staff, 39; Commissariat, 53; Medical Dept., 16; Paymaster-Gen. Dept., 4; R.A., 288; R.E., 23; Staff Corps, 31; 1/21st, 1204; 1/62nd, 1027; 3rd Line K.G.L., 1001; 6th do., 971; 8th do., 105; Duke of York's Greek L.I., 250; 1st and 3rd Italian regts., 1220; Calabrian Free Corps, 618. *Sicilians:* Staff, 7; artillery, 222; engineers, 130; 2nd cavalry, 125; 2nd infantry, 1186. *Total:* 345 officers; 8126 n.c.o. and men; 53 clerks.
2nd Division. Macfarlane. Staff, 11; 2/14th, 1140;* 1/31st, 713; 8th Line K.G.L., 881; Italian artillery, 53. *Sicilians:* 2nd cav., 287; Grenadiers, 827; 3rd and 4th inf., 1222. *Total:* 244 officers; 5890 n.c.o. and men.

* This battalion had been withdrawn apparently from Genoa.

with all that he found there. Bellegarde not only declined to spare more than four or five hundred horse, but, having lately received a severe check from the French on the Mincio, was disinclined to do anything whatever. In fact, according to Lord William's judgment, Bellegarde and Murat were playing the same game, each wishing to gain time in the hope that events elsewhere would decide the contest, and each throwing the responsibility upon the other. 1814. March.

This was probably true, but Bentinck had himself contributed not a little to the supineness of the two commanders by his own tactless arrogance. Lord William had, to speak plainly, lost his mental balance, which at the best of times was none of the stablest, and was for taking upon himself the future regulation of the entire Italian Peninsula. He had already made mischief by insinuating to the Hereditary Prince of Naples that Sicily with a free constitution could only be successfully governed by Great Britain. He had also offended Murat, who had offered to him the military occupation of Tuscany, by demanding further the concession of the civil authority to himself personally. Lastly, upon landing at Leghorn, he had published a proclamation respecting the wish of the British Government to deliver the Italians from tyranny, which lent itself to misconstruction, and was in fact misconstrued to mean not only the deliverance of Italy from the yoke of France, but the establishment under British auspices of what is called popular government. Of a truth this was precisely what Bentinck desired to convey and, if he could, to bring about, without the slightest reflection upon the state of Europe at large or upon the relations of his Government with foreign powers. The poor man's intentions were good, but his political intelligence was bounded by the first article of the Whig creed, "I believe in the glorious Revolution of 1688."

Such proceedings were naturally thought both by Murat and Bellegarde to have been dictated by the

1814. March. British Foreign Office; wherefore very pardonably Murat became suspicious of British designs against himself, and Bellegarde of crooked dealing on the part of England towards Austria. Castlereagh, who was engaged in the Herculean task of bringing the jealous powers of Europe to an arrangement which might secure a durable peace, remonstrated by rebukes which were unfortunately too gentle. "It is not," he wrote, "by fighting British against Neapolitan influence in Tuscany, nor by abandoning Austria to Murat's augmented intrigues that good is to be done. It is by staying where you are upon any reasonable system, and by making the tide flow so strongly in favour of the Allied cause that Murat will be *entraîné* with it." In another letter, concerning Bentinck's foolish utterances to the Prince of Naples, Castlereagh dwelt on the danger "of hazarding speculations not only wholly unauthorised, but inconsistent with the existing relations of your Court." Lastly, he commented upon Bentinck's proclamation in the following terms: "This incident proves how necessary it is, surrounded as your Lordship must be by individuals who wish for another system to be established in Italy, not to afford any plausible pretext for umbrage to those with whom we are acting. . . . It is not insurrection we now want in Italy or elsewhere —we want disciplined force under Sovereigns that we can trust."[1] Such hints would have been accepted by any sensible man as a warning. They were lost upon Bentinck. He professed admiration for Wellington; but it never occurred to him that it was "by staying where he was upon any reasonable principle" that Wellington had driven the French from the Iberian Peninsula.

Meanwhile General Montresor had reconnoitred the enemy's position in the Gulf of Spezia on the 24th of March. Finding the French in too great strength to permit him to force the passage of the river Magra, he

[1] Castlereagh to Bentinck, 3rd April 1814. *Castlereagh Despatches*, ix. 427.

made a demonstration against their front opposite Sarzana, and detached a column up the water to turn their left. Whether owing to these dispositions or, as is more likely, to the menace of the British squadron under Admiral Rowley on the other flank, the enemy retired and, being pursued, fled precipitately, abandoning three guns. Montresor then invested Fort Santa Maria, situated upon a small peninsula which runs into the Gulf of Spezia. With great exertion fifteen heavy pieces were brought up over the mountains by the seamen of the squadron; batteries were constructed, and after a cannonade of eighteen hours the fort capitulated on the 30th. Thereby was secured a safe anchorage for the navy, and a safe depôt, in the shape of the islet of Palmaria, for stores. At the same time the position threatened Genoa, offered a ready communication with Parma by way of Pontremoli, if needed, and, being inaccessible from the north to troops with artillery, and covered by the Magra on the east, afforded an admirable base for an army.

1814. March. Mar. 30.

A few days later Bentinck arrived at Leghorn in person, and, hearing that there were only two thousand men in Genoa, resolved to advance rapidly upon that city. He therefore pushed north-westward along the coast with an advanced party, but on reaching Sestri learned that the enemy at Genoa had been reinforced to a strength of five to six thousand men. The country being mountainous and difficult, the roads very bad, and transport both by land and sea deficient, Bentinck saw no prospect of bringing up his Second Division before the 14th, and in the meanwhile could only clear the way with Montresor's troops. On the 8th of April the French were driven from Sestri; on the 12th, after some resistance, they were forced back from Nervi; and on the 13th Montresor established himself at Sturla. The enemy then took up a position with their right resting on the sea, their centre at San Martino, and their left covered by two forts. Here Bentinck attacked them on the 17th. A confused

April. April 8.

1814. action followed ; the French front being covered by a
April 17. network of villas and gardens ; but eventually the two forts on the French left were captured. The enemy retired precipitately into Genoa ; and Bentinck, advancing towards the weakest point of the fortifications, began to throw up batteries. Thereupon a deputation of the inhabitants came out to entreat that the place might not be bombarded, since peace was almost certain ; and after much parley the French General agreed to a convention under which his troops should share possession of Genoa with the Allies until the 21st, and should then march out with the honours of war. Bentinck's casualties, on the 13th, 14th and 18th together, little exceeded two hundred killed and wounded, so that the fighting was not of a very desperate character. Since Corsica had risen in insurrection against the French, a detachment was despatched to that island under Montresor to support the insurgents ; while the rest of the force was for the most part sent back to Gibraltar and Sicily. Therewith Bentinck's insignificant campaign came to an end.

But Lord William had not yet lost sight of his darling scheme ; and an opportunity soon occurred for prosecuting it. Bellegarde and Eugène Beauharnais had, while Bentinck was before Genoa, signed a convention for the evacuation of Italy by the French troops ; but it was suspected that the Viceroy was intriguing with the Milanese in the hope that they would solicit him to be their prince. A deputation from the senate of Milan had actually started for Eugène's head-quarters with that object, when the populace of the city broke into insurrection, appointed a provisional government, and sent emissaries to the head-quarters of the Allied powers to beg for protection. Those that came to Bentinck professed a desire also for a free constitution ; and the bait was too tempting to be rejected. Bentinck at once sent General Macfarlane to Milan "to act as mediator between the parties," justifying his disobedience to Castlereagh's instructions, which

forbade him to countenance any revolution, upon the ground that this revolution had sprung from hatred of French tyranny. Naturally the party represented by the Provisional Government addressed Macfarlane with demands for British troops, British commissioners and British regulation for the future of Italy. Another soldier, more flighty even than Bentinck, Sir Robert Wilson, encouraged them; and Macfarlane assured Castlereagh that the Italians would receive a British Prince for King with joyful unanimity. 1814. April

Castlereagh was much annoyed. He was striving with infinite pains to make the Powers work in concert; and here was a stupid subordinate doing his utmost to offend both Austria and Sardinia. After venting his vexation in a letter to Liverpool, denouncing "Bentinck's intolerable proneness to Whig revolutions everywhere," he gave orders for Macfarlane to be recalled from Milan, and endeavoured to instil into Lord William a little sound sense. "It is impossible," wrote Castlereagh, "not to perceive a great moral change in Europe, and that the principles of freedom are in full operation—the danger is that the transition may be too sudden to ripen into anything likely to make the world better or happier. We have new constitutions launched in France, Spain, Holland and Sardinia. Let us see the result before we encourage further attempts. . . . I should prefer seeing the Italians await the insensible influence of what is going on elsewhere than hazard their own internal quiet by an effort at this moment." Nor did Castlereagh fail to grant Bentinck leave of absence, which Lord William had already requested in the event of a general peace, and to abstain from employing him again.

Beyond question Bentinck was rightly served. It is easy for sentimental gentlemen, both British and Italian, to say that Bentinck anticipated the establishment of Italian unity and freedom by nearly half a century, and to exalt him upon that account as an enlightened statesman. No doubt Italian unity and freedom (if popular

1814. April. government be freedom) may be good things; but even forty years after Bentinck's escapade the Italians were still unable to achieve them for themselves without foreign assistance. Had not Castlereagh called Lord William smartly to heel, the Coalition would almost certainly have been dissolved; the great Powers would have flown at each others' throats: Italy would have become once more the scene of desolating wars; Napoleon who, as Bentinck himself remarked, was dangerously near at Elba, would infallibly have regained the throne of France; and the European conflagration, which after burning more than twenty years had been nearly quenched, would have blazed up anew. And all these misfortunes would have befallen because a wrong-headed man indulged himself, in direct contravention of the conduct prescribed to him, with the luxury of translating his very crude prejudices into practice. Such behaviour, the fruit less of vice than of stupidity and conceit, cannot be too strongly condemned; and Bentinck's example should be held up as a warning to all generals who dabble in sentimental politics.[1]

Mar. 26. Let us now return to Wellington, whom we left before Toulouse on the 26th of March. On that morning Soult, finding himself overtaken by his enemy, withdrew the greater part of his army within the walls of Toulouse. Clausel's two divisions crossed the Garonne, and took up their quarters in the suburb of St. Étienne on the eastern side of the town; while Pierre Soult's cavalry, passing also to the right bank, was echeloned along the border of the river northward from Toulouse to Grisolles. Reille's two divisions occupied the suburb of St. Cyprien on the western side; and only d'Erlon's troops, with two regiments of horse, remained outside the western front, the main

[1] The foregoing paragraphs are based on Bentinck's correspondence in the Record Office. To Sec. of State, 15th, 27th Feb.; 26th March; 6th, 20th April; 10th May, 1814. *Castlereagh Corres.* ix. 400, 409, 427-436, 442, 477-478, 509; and an article by Signor Giuseppe Gallavresi in *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, 31st March 1909.

body being concentrated at the junction of the roads to Auch and Lombez, and the advanced posts extended along the right bank of the Touch from its junction with the Garonne on the north through Tournefeuille to the village of St. Simon on the south. 1814. Mar. 26.

On that evening the Allies bivouacked along a line from Fontenilles through Fonsorbes-St. Lys to Noé, with advanced posts pushed out to Léguevin, Plaisance and Muret. On the 27th their vanguards advanced concentrically upon the suburb of St. Cyprien, so as to drive the French inside the walls, and clear the way for the passage of the river above the city. After a sharp skirmish Reille's outposts were beaten back from the bridge of Tournefeuille, and the van of the Allies was brought forward to Blagnac on the left, Colomiers and Plaisance in the centre, and Portet on the right. Soult, suspecting nothing, remained inactive; and at eight o'clock in the evening Wellington brought his pontoons down to the Garonne and began to lay his bridge. The pontoons were found to be too few for the breadth of the stream, and it was necessary to withdraw the whole of the boats, and to march the troops, that were waiting to cross, back to their quarters. It is said that Wellington had been warned by his chief engineer that the pontoons which he was taking with him were insufficient for a really wide river, and that this mishap was the result of the Commander-in-Chief's obstinacy. Be that as it may, the failure was somewhat ignominious.[1] Mar. 27.

Nevertheless on the 28th Wellington made his dispositions still more definitely for a second attempt to pass the river at the same point. The entire army was wheeled slightly to its right—that is to say to south-eastward. The Fourth and Sixth Divisions occupied Colomiers, Tournefeuille and Plaisance; the Third and Light Divisions covered the ground from Plaisance to Mar. 28.

[1] Larpent, p. 488. George Napier says, "I never saw him in such a rage and no wonder"; but Larpent's cool contemporary judgment is more likely to be correct.

1814. Mar. 28. Cugnaux; Hill's corps prolonged the line through Villeneuve and Frouzins to Muret, with a vanguard at Portet; and head-quarters were moved eastward from St. Lys to Seysses. Still Soult remained supine. He never dreamed of an attempt to cross the Garonne above Toulouse, and with some reason, for the situation of the city was such as to make the enterprise most hazardous.

Toulouse is built upon both banks of the Garonne at a point where the river offers, to an enemy approaching from the south-west, a re-entrant angle. The bulk of the city lies upon the eastern bank, the suburb of St. Cyprien alone standing upon the western bank; and the whole, in 1814, still constituted something of a fortified place with a total perimeter of some three miles. The suburb of St. Cyprien formed a bridge-head, being enclosed by a battlemented wall and a ditch, which was supplemented by a first line of entrenchments, with two bastions and a block-house, commanding the principal avenues of approach. A second line of defence had been thrown up about six hundred yards outside this first line, and fifteen guns mounted in it, the centre being at the junction of the roads to Auch and to Lombez. On the south side this earthwork was prolonged to the edge of the river, and was strengthened for some distance from the water by an abatis; to northward it was eked out by walls and fortified buildings till it abutted on a swamp at some distance from the stream. On the right bank of the Garonne the end of the old wall was masked along the southern and part of the eastern front by the houses of the suburbs of St. Michel and St. Étienne. From the edge of the latter suburb northward the fortifications were less obscured by buildings; and on the north front, which covered the arsenal, they were fairly clear. At this point the wall was well flanked with towers and in excellent order. Beyond the first line of defence the Languedoc Canal formed a second along the whole length of the northern and eastern fronts, every bridge and lock being strongly fortified.

East of this again stands a low line of heights, called the heights of Calvinet, forming a natural glacis to the river Hers, a deep stream between steep banks, whose course runs parallel to the Languedoc Canal. The arsenal within the walls furnished abundant material and munitions of war. 1814. Mar. 28.

In this very strong position Soult resolved to fortify himself still further and to shut himself up. The inhabitants were in a state of consternation, for the troops in the town were extremely disorderly, laying violent hands on everything that they fancied; and the requisitions of the Marshal were not less exacting. But Soult cared for none of their complaints. The town furnished not a few resources for an army, and could provide even a small reinforcement in the shape of a reserve division under General Travot, made up of the recruiting depôts of twenty-four regiments and a certain number of National Guards. Soult checked desertion by the promise of two months' pay, swept in convalescents and malingerers by means of patrols, and succeeded to some extent in putting down plunder and marauding. The failure of his previous efforts at fortification on the Nivelle and at Bayonne might have warned the Marshal of the futility of these passive methods of defence as compared with a vigilant and energetic offensive, but at Toulouse Soult enjoyed an enormous advantage in the barrier offered to the Allies by the Garonne. Unless he chose to storm the bridge-head of St. Cyprien out of hand—which could hardly fail to be a costly operation—Wellington was bound to pass the river in order to manœuvre his adversary out of Toulouse; and, so long as that bridge-head was in Soult's possession, the Marshal could always concentrate the whole of his army to fall upon either part of Wellington's force as soon as it should be divided by the act of crossing.

Wellington was resolved to gain Toulouse by manœuvre and not by storm; and he had made up his mind to cross the river above Toulouse instead of

1814. below, because he thus approached the city from its
Mar. 28-29. weakest side, where it was unprotected by the canal, and turned the flank of the heights of Calvinet. The operation was delicate. If, on the one hand, he attempted to pass the Garonne below the confluence of the Ariège, which was less than four miles from the city, he exposed himself to a flank attack from the greater part of Soult's army. If, on the other hand, he endeavoured to throw a corps over the river at a safe distance above Toulouse, that corps would have two rivers to traverse instead of one, which would practically sever it from the rest of the Allies, and would find itself in a difficult hilly country with roads that in fine weather were bad, and after heavy rain almost impracticable. Wellington's deliberate preference for this operation showed that he had lost all respect for his adversary, and was ready to take every kind of liberty with him. This being so, it is somewhat surprising that he did not storm the suburb of St. Cyprien at once without giving the French time to recover themselves after their retreat. Soult's whole scheme of defence depended upon the bridge-head which enabled him to act upon either bank of the Garonne. If that bridge-head were lost, the scheme collapsed, and he had no alternative but to retreat. An assault at this point would probably have been costly, but it was not more hazardous, and not likely therefore to be more costly, than the passage of the river above Toulouse.

Mar. 30. Be that as it may, on the night of the 30th Wellington laid down his bridge opposite Pinsaguel, above the confluence of the Ariège, where the stream, being narrower, required a smaller number of pontoons. With considerable difficulty, for the river was swelled by two days of rain, the bridge was completed by four
Mar. 31. in the morning of the 31st; and Hill's corps, Fane's cavalry brigade, three batteries and Morillo's Spanish brigade—in all thirteen thousand men and eighteen guns—began the crossing at once, while the divisions of Picton and Freire moved up to replace these troops

about Portet and Muret and Frouzins. Wellington's hope was that before daylight Pane's cavalry, one battery and one brigade of infantry might move up the Ariège and seize the bridge of Cintegabelle; and Sir Rowland was charged to find out if there were a way, passable by artillery, leading on the right bank of the Ariège from Cintegabelle across to Montgiscard or to Castanet, on the great road from Toulouse to Carcassonne. With a carelessness, or possibly a temerity, for which it is difficult to account, Wellington ordered the bridge of boats to be taken up as soon as Hill's corps should have traversed it, and to be replaced by a flying bridge from Muret. 1814. Mar. 31.

Meanwhile in the course of the night the French cavalry sent in a report of Hill's movement, but Soult took no notice until the intelligence was confirmed by a civil official early in the morning of the 31st. He then ordered Clausel to choose a position for the army to the south of Vieille Toulouse, and made enquiry as to the possibility of bringing artillery to the spot. At eight o'clock definite news came in that the British had laid one bridge and were laying another. By that time Villatte's division had reached Ramonville St. Agne, about five miles north-east from Pinsaguel, and Harispe's division was streaming out of the suburb of St. Michel. Soult ordered Clausel to check Hill and drive him into the river before his troops were formed up, promising to support the movement with d'Erlon's corps; and at the same time he directed Reille to be ready to repel a feint attack upon St. Cyprien, or, if none should be delivered, to send Taupin's division to him. Lastly Soult formed Travot's reserve on the heights of Calvinet facing Toulouse and across the road to Albi, which was the line of retreat appointed for the army.

These arrangements were strange, since, for one thing, Clausel could not attack Hill, who was safe on the other side of the Ariège; but Soult's conduct when he reached Vieille Toulouse was stranger still. The defiling

1814. of Hill's corps across the bridge lasted until noon, and
Mar. 31. during the last three hours Soult watched the process, counted Sir Rowland's numbers with tolerable accuracy, and yet did nothing. He could see the rest of the Allied army on the Touch, and concluded—or professed to conclude—that Wellington was only making a demonstration on the south with a view to an attack upon the town or to an ultimate passage of the river to the north of the city. But the Marshal made no attempt to use his bridge-head for purposes of offence.

Hill on his side led his corps beyond Cintegabelle, pushed his cavalry eastward to Nailloux and Villefranche; but, finding no such road as he sought, he countermarched by Wellington's direction on the night of the
April 1. 1st of April, and recrossed the Garonne by the bridge of Pinsaguel, which Wellington on second thoughts had allowed to remain where it was. By the afternoon of the
April 2. 2nd of April only a rear-guard remained between the Garonne and the Ariège; and Soult, more than ever convinced by the appearance of British patrols along the river below Toulouse that Wellington would pass the stream in that quarter, gave orders for the entrenchment of the heights of Calvinet, for placing Toulouse in a state of defence, and even for bringing back some artillery which had by his command been already sent
April 3. out of the town. On the 3rd, having intelligence which confirmed his suspicions, the Marshal directed the trees that lined the road to Albi, between the bridge over the Hers and an isolated hill called the Mamelon de la Pujade, to be felled and made into an abatis; and he further ordered the preparation of defensive positions along the canal from its junction with the Garonne to the Matabiau bridge and thence along the Albi road to the Hers. Into this re-entrant angle he hoped, apparently, that Wellington would thrust the Allied army; and accordingly he summoned six out of his seven divisions to the right bank of the Garonne, leaving Maransin's alone to hold the bridge-head of St. Cyprien. It seems not to have occurred to Soult

that the march of the Allies across the western front of Toulouse might offer a favourable opportunity for the offensive. He preferred the old tactics of Orthez —to take up a strong position in the hope that Wellington would not dare to attack. 1814. April 3.

Upon the main point the Marshal was not deceived. No sooner had Hill recrossed the river than the pontoon-bridge was taken up and replaced by a flying bridge; and at dusk of the 3rd the pontoon-train, followed by almost the entire army of the Allies, proceeded by St. Martin du Touch, Aussonne and Merville towards La Capelette; the Light Division remaining before St. Cyprien at Plaisance, St. Martin du Touch and Tournefeuille until Hill's corps arrived to relieve it, and then taking up a position between Aussonne and Seilh, so as to be at hand to support Hill, in case he were attacked. The whole movement was not completed until the morning of the 5th; and meanwhile the bridge had been laid during the night of the 4th between St. Caprais and La Capelette, at a point where the left bank was covered with wood and commanded the right bank. The Third, Fourth and Sixth divisions of infantry, Somerset's, Ponsonby's and Vivian's brigades of cavalry, and three batteries of artillery then crossed to the right bank; but the operation was dangerous, for rain had begun to fall again on the 3rd, the stream was rapidly rising, and there was a nasty bend in the bridge. From eleven o'clock until evening the crossing continued, the horses being led over in single file and the guns dragged over by hand, while the bands played "The Fall of Paris" to hearten the men to their work. At dusk Beresford and twenty thousand men were on the right bank; but rain was again falling. One of the pontoons was carried away, and the rest were taken up lest they should meet with the like fate. Before the bridge could be removed the French floated down dead horses, trees and a barge full of stones, in the hope of destroying it, but happily without effect. On the 6th the rain April 4-5.

1814. continued. The truant pontoon was recovered, but
April 6. to relay the bridge was found impossible, and a flying bridge was therefore substituted for it. On the 7th the weather improved; but the current was still too strong to permit the pontoons to be moored, and not
April 8. until the 8th was the bridge finally re-established.

Throughout these three days the Allied army was severed in twain by an impassable obstacle, and practically divided into three parts—Hill's corps before St. Cyprien; Picton, Alten, Arentschild and Freire about Merville; and Beresford on the other side of the river. Murray, fully alive to the danger, warned Picton to select ground for a bridge-head, and directed that every precaution should be taken to prevent the situation from becoming known to Soult. Wellington himself passed frequently to the right bank to observe with natural anxiety what might be stirring. Yet Soult, to the amazement of his officers, made no effort to turn his advantage to account. His conduct is difficult of explanation. It seems that, mistaking Morillo's Spaniards, which had taken up the outpost duties of Hill's corps, for those of Freire, he concluded that Hill also had moved northward to cross the Garonne; but he did not make this discovery until the 6th, and in his own letters of the 5th he mentions that a column of British was on that evening marching to the point of passage. Plainly, therefore, he was aware that Hill's corps and another division were still on the left bank. On the 6th he wrote that he did not know the exact strength of the Allies on the right bank, but that he had reason to believe that it included the greater part of the army. On the 7th he affirmed again that the bulk of the Allies were on the right bank, and directed his cavalry to obtain more precise intelligence, but he gave no orders except for further fortification of his position. It may be that he was aware of the approach of the main army of the Allies to Paris, and was unwilling to commit himself to any definite action, though the news of the occupation of Paris did not

reach him until the evening of the 7th. It is more probable that he was sick of his task, cowed by his opponent, and incapable of further effort than the preparation of an entrenched camp. 1814. April 8.

On the 8th the bridge of boats was restored; Arentschild's and Freire's troops passed over it, and the troops on the right bank advanced in two columns along the banks of the Hers, Picton's and Freire's divisions by the road to Toulouse, Clinton's and Cole's towards Launaguet. It was Wellington's object to clear the ground sufficiently to permit the pontoon-bridge to be laid at Seilh for the passage of the Light Division, and if possible to seize three bridges over the Hers to enable him to assault the heights of Calvinet. The British cavalry on the three previous days had already driven the French horse from the lower course of the stream; and the Eighteenth Hussars, which were on the left flank of the left column, were soon in contact with Pierre Soult's dragoons. Pierre Soult had orders from his brother to fall back slowly up the Hers to the southern end of the heights of Calvinet, but to leave strong detachments to guard the bridges, particularly that of Croix Daurade on the road to Albi. Pursuant to these instructions Berton's brigade had retired towards the Lavaur road, and that of Vial had halted on the eastern side of the bridge of Croix Daurade. Vial's picquets were surprised by the patrols of the Eighteenth in the village of St. Loup, and driven back with some loss in killed and prisoners; and his regiments then retired, the bulk of them along the Albi road, but one of them—the 5th Chasseurs—to a village on the flank of the Eighteenth, from which they opened a galling fire of carbines.

Vivian, who was with the Eighteenth, rode to a neighbouring height to reconnoitre and was there joined by Beresford and Wellington, the latter of whom ordered him to push the enemy over the Hers, promising the support of infantry if necessary. Detaching a troop to check the dismounted French on his flank, Vivian leaped

1814. April 8. his horse out of the road to reconnoitre Croix Daurade, and ascertained that a mass of French cavalry was on the other side of the bridge and moving down towards it, but no infantry. Turning about to rejoin his regiment, he was struck by a carbine shot in the arm, but cantered back and gave the order to charge. As he raised his sword to signal the advance, the bone of his arm snapped and he fell fainting from the saddle; but Major Hughes led the Eighteenth down the road and, though they were received with a volley of musketry, they crashed into the head of the French column and jammed the French horsemen into a confused crowd on the bridge. In a minute or two the French regiments were galloping headlong to the rear with the British hussars in hot pursuit. One hundred and twenty prisoners, with their horses, were taken; Pierre Soult himself narrowly escaped capture; and the chase ended only when the hussars came within range of the French guns, under cover of which the discomfited French troopers rallied, and forced the Eighteenth to retire. This regiment was no favourite with Wellington, but on this occasion he honoured them with "Well done, the Eighteenth; by God, well done." Of the British not more than fifteen, including Vivian, were killed, wounded and missing.[1]

This brilliant little affair, which took place late in the afternoon,[2] secured communication between the two columns of the Allies, though by one bridge only instead of by three as Wellington had designed, those over the Lavaur and Caraman roads being too far

[1] Napier, who apparently did not love Vivian, refused to give him any credit for the affair, even when Vivian in a singularly modest letter had laid before him the true state of the case. See Malet's *Memoirs of the 18th Hussars*, pp. 93-101. But Napier emulated Wellington in his unwillingness to take back anything that he had once said. I have alluded elsewhere to the diseased condition of Napier's mind while writing his history.

[2] Soult gave the hour as 2 P.M.; but an officer of the 18th states it at 5 P.M., which seems more probable, for the charge appears to have ended the operations of the day.

distant to be seized, and having been, moreover, either destroyed or prepared for destruction by the French. The village of Croix Daurade being in the occupation of the Fourth Division, the General resolved to attack on the morrow ; and to that end gave orders for the relaying of the pontoon-bridge at Assaic, four miles farther up the river, for the passage of the Light Division. By some blunder this was not accomplished until three in the afternoon,[1] and Wellington, after freely venting his anger upon the responsible officers, deferred the operation until the 10th. Meanwhile on the afternoon of the 9th Freire's Spaniards moved from Lespinasse by St. Alban to Lalande, but no further changes were made. The rear of the Allies was covered against any movement on the part of the garrison of Montauban by Ponsonby's brigade at St. Jory and Lespinasse, and by a portion of that of Vivian at Fronton. 1814. April 8. April 9.

Soult for his part had expected battle on the 9th, and had made every preparation for it. The north front of Toulouse he could safely leave to take care of itself, the canal being within range of the cannon on the walls, and every bridge strongly fortified, particularly the twin bridges of Jumeaux at the north-western angle, which were enclosed by a double bridge-head with three guns mounted on the outward front. The eastward front of Toulouse was covered by the heights of Calvinet, which rise from the side of the town in a fairly steep slope to a height of about one hundred and fifty feet, and descend from this summit in less sharp declivity for about two hundred feet to the valley of the Hers. This ridge of Calvinet, which extends for some three miles in a general direction from north to south,

[1] La Blache throws doubt on the removal of the bridge farther up the river ; but his reasons do not seem to me conclusive, especially against the testimony of Larpent (p. 479) and of Cooke (ii. 125), who says that the Light Division remained halted near Aussonne throughout the 9th waiting for the completion of the bridge, and after crossing it, wheeled to the right near Fenouillet. They would have wheeled to the right farther north if they had crossed the river lower down.

1814. April 9. had been fortified by three groups of works to defend the access by the roads of Albi, Lavaur and Caraman. The last-named, which crosses the hill about a mile and a half from its southern extremity, was dominated by a redoubt on the summit about two hundred yards on its southern side;[1] and four hundred yards farther to south of this redoubt was another named La Sypière, enclosing a house and grounds at the head of a by-road. Both of these works were unfinished on the 10th. The Lavaur road was guarded by a closed work on the crest, surrounding a house called the Mas des Augustins,[2] and on Calvinet, the highest point of the ridge, about two hundred yards in rear and to west of this house, was a second work of the same description. Farther to the north a series of epaulments, called the Great Redoubt, overlooked the hollow road of Peyriolle, which cuts through the ridge near the northern extremity, and flanked the more distant Albi road; while two smaller redoubts, included in the same system of defence, commanded the reverse slope. These entrenchments as a whole were connected by a road of communication lined with planks to prevent the slipping of a treacherous clay soil. The view of the ground from the site of the Mas des Augustins presents a shallow valley, which offers a clear field of fire for some twelve hundred yards until the surface is broken by the low hills on the eastern side of the Hers.

The defence of the heights at large was entrusted to Clausel; and Vial's cavalry brigade was placed at his disposal to communicate with Berton's in the valley of the Hers, and to destroy the bridges as the Allies drew near. In advance of his left St. Pol's brigade of Villatte's division occupied the villages of Mont Blanc, Peyriolle and Argoulets on the flank of the Albi road,

[1] La Blache by a strange slip has mistaken the orientation of the battle-field of Toulouse. He has assumed the top of the map, which he has reproduced, to be the north point, whereas it is in reality the east.

[2] Mas is Provençal for house. I presume that this was an ancient convent.

and the outlying knoll of La Pujade in rear of them, cannon being mounted on the summit. Lamorandière's brigade held the Great Redoubt, three regiments of Harispe's division the Mas des Augustins and Calvinet ; and one battalion of the 9th Light occupied La Sypière. 1814. April 9.

The defence of the canal along the northern front, from the Garonne to the bridge of Matabiau on the Albi road, was entrusted to d'Erlon. Darricau's division was spread along this line ; while Darmagnac's division was distributed among the market gardens outside the bridge of Matabiau, excepting the 31st Light, which occupied the defences of the bridge of Minimes on the northern front of the canal.

Of Reille's corps Maransin's division, three thousand strong, remained in St. Cyprien, with orders to send its artillery to Calvinet if this could be done without danger; and Taupin's division was massed on the Caraman road between the canal and the southern slope of the Calvinet ridge, ready to ascend the hill at the first summons.

Of Travot's reserve one brigade lined the canal from the bridge of Matabiau to that of Les Demoiselles, the next to southward ; and the other, divided between the ramparts and the quays of the Garonne, was held ready to reinforce d'Erlon or Reille according to circumstances. The entire French force in position amounted to some thirty-eight thousand men.

Wellington did not conceal from himself that the task before him was to all intent the storming of a fortress, and that, before he could even form his columns for the attack, he must march at any rate some of them for about two miles along the valley between the Hers and the ridge of Calvinet at a distance at first of two thousand yards, which gradually diminished to five hundred yards, from Soult's main position. This difficult and dangerous duty was assigned to Beresford with the Fourth and Sixth Divisions, the Hussar Brigade being also added to his

1814. command, so as to cover his left flank when he should
April 10. wheel westward to the attack. To relieve him as far as possible, Hill was ordered to make a demonstration against St. Cyprien on the left bank of the Garonne, and Picton and Alten to deliver feint attacks upon the north front, the former covering the ground from the Garonne to the bridge of Minimes, the latter from this bridge to the Albi road. Bock's brigade of cavalry was appointed to guard the rear of these in case of a sortie by the garrison of Montauban.

Upon the left of Alten, Freire's Spaniards were to advance from Croix Daurade in two columns, of which the right was to move to west of the Albi road upon the hamlet of La Pujade, and the left along the road to the knoll of La Pujade. Arrived there, Freire was to await the opening of Beresford's attack upon the ridge of Calvinet, and then, advancing in two lines with a reserve, was to storm the Great Redoubt and its outworks. Ponsonby's cavalry brigade was to take post in support of the Spaniards, and Vivian's was to march parallel with Beresford's column on the right bank of the Hers, and to cross the stream when needed.

At three o'clock on the morning of Easter Sunday, the 10th of April, the British columns were in motion, the Sixth Division moving upon Launaguet, and the Light Division crossing the Garonne; and at six o'clock Soult on the summit of Calvinet saw them converging towards Toulouse by Lalande, Croix Daurade and Peyriolle. Vivian's brigade, now under command of Major von Grüben, pushed forward actively on the right bank of the Hers, driving Berton's troopers before them. Vial's cavalry blew up the culvert of Balma on the Lavaur road before von Grüben could reach it; but the 1st Hussars of the Legion, which led his brigade, pushed rapidly on; and Captain Schaumann's squadron, charging a superior force of French which stood in its way, drove them back in confusion upon their supports and hunted them down the Lavaur road, where the bridge was blown up

only in the nick of time to save it from falling into the hands of the hussars. The French lost nearly fifty prisoners in this affair; but von Grüben, wasting no time, hurried his detachments forward to the bridge on the Revel road, which was barricaded by casks filled with earth and defended by a party of the 22nd Chasseurs. A few of Schaumann's men dismounted and quickly removed the casks, whereupon the squadron, pouring through the gap, chased the French horse over the plain to the shelter of their guns. By eight o'clock Schaumann's patrols had passed round the rear of the ridge of Calvinet to the vicinity of the bridge des Demoiselles on the canal, where they were checked by the fire of the divisions of Taupin and Travot. Von Grüben had done his work thoroughly and well. 1814. April 10.

A little later, between eight and nine, Hill opened his false attack against the French defences on the bank of the river below the town. One of Maransin's battalions, which occupied the buildings in that quarter, gave way at once; and the British were able to establish in the deserted defences field-guns which took both the centre of the outermost French line and the bridge of Jumeaux in reverse. Following up this advantage gained on the extreme right of the enemy's western front, Hill gradually pushed back the French within the rampart of the suburb, and held them there without attempting any serious attack. Almost simultaneously with the first advance of Hill, Picton, marching up the right bank of the river, drove Darricau's sharp-shooters from a large house, called Petit Gragnague, before the bridge of Jumeaux, and there took post; while Alten's first brigade struck eastward to the support of Freire, leaving the second brigade to make a demonstration before the bridge of Minimes. The Spaniards meanwhile advanced steadily upon the knoll of La Pujade, Somerset's hussars having swept Pierre Soult's cavalry almost unresisting from the adjacent villages. After firing a few cannon-shots St. Pol withdrew his guns and men from the knoll and fell back along the Albi road;

1814. and Freire, after occupying the deserted position,
April 10. halted his infantry and opened fire from his three batteries upon Villatte's guns below the Great Redoubt. Wellington then took up his station on the knoll to watch the progress of the Fourth and Sixth Divisions, which had reached Croix Daurade soon after seven, and were streaming in three columns south-eastward towards Peyriolle, two of the columns moving as far as possible beyond [1] range of the French cannon behind the copses that sprinkled the bank of the Hers, and the third passing immediately below the slope of Calvinet under the full blast of the French guns. Soult, upon first observing their approach from the highest eminence of Calvinet, immediately summoned Taupin's division to join him at that point, in evident expectation that the British might at any moment wheel to their right and begin the attack.

Beresford's progress was slow, the clay soil being rendered deep and sticky by the previous heavy rains. The guns were constantly in difficulties, and, as the head of the column moved at the double, the rear lengthened out more and more over ground which had been poached into a quagmire by the feet of their comrades.[2] Still Beresford's objective became clear to Soult, who now sent Taupin's division to the Caraman road to meet him. Shortly afterwards, at about eleven o'clock, Freire, owing to nervousness or impatience, launched his troops in two columns to the attack ; the right advancing up the Albi road towards the bridge of Matabiau, while the left under the Spanish General in person moved straight upon the Great Redoubt.

[1] The column nearest to the French appears to have been Anson's brigade of the 4th Division, leading, and Pack's brigade of the 6th Division. The next column was composed apparently of the two remaining brigades of these two divisions ; and the last column, nearest the Hers, of their two Portuguese brigades.

[2] *Personal Narrative of a Private Soldier of the 42nd* (p. 245) says of this march : "It was not a march, we were running all the time," and this is confirmed by Jameson's *Historical Record of the 79th*, p. 43.

Though met by a very heavy fire from the guns by the bridge of Matabiau and from the heavier pieces mounted on the walls of the city, the Spaniards advanced gallantly enough to the foot of the slope, where Freire's column halted in a re-entrant angle between two spurs and spread out right and left to envelope the hill and outflank the redoubt. They had begun to swarm up the incline when two of Darmagnac's regiments, which had been concealed in the gardens that line the road to Albi, suddenly developed a sharp counter-attack upon the front of the right column and the flank of the scattered parties of the left column, which were breasting the ascent. The Spaniards were seized with panic. The left wing ran back precipitately, with the exception of one regiment, which lay down behind a bank and held its ground; and the right wing rushed for shelter into a hollow road on the northern flank of the French entrenchments. They could have chosen no worse refuge. The road was raked from end to end by the heavy guns on the walls; and the French infantry, leaping down to the edge of the hollow, poured a deadly fire of musketry into the struggling masses below them. Under so terrible a trial the right wing speedily gave way, and the whole of the nine thousand Spaniards streamed back in hopeless disorder; a few of them by an evil inspiration following the line of the walls to the bridge of Minimes under a scathing fire from the ramparts, and the remainder racing for the shelter of the knoll of La Pujade. 1814. April 10.

Upon first perceiving Freire's precipitate advance Wellington, who had marked the withdrawal of Taupin's division to south, had ordered Beresford to suspend his march, wheel westward at once, and open his attack from the ground where he stood, about the village of Mont Blanc. But Beresford, who had likewise noticed Taupin's movements and could see that the French were posted exactly as Wellington had anticipated when he had issued his original directions,

1814. April 10. decided not to depart from the plan that had been arranged.[1] He did indeed wheel the column that was nearest to the hill into line, to the right, opposite the Mas des Augustins, though apparently only from apprehension lest the French counterstroke upon the Spaniards should be extended to his corps; but finding his fears to be groundless, he wheeled his men back into column, and resumed his march southward.[2] For a time therefore the assault came to an end; while Wellington, drawing Alten's division to the Albi road and barring the way to Croix Daurade with Ponsonby's cavalry, strove vehemently to rally the disordered Spaniards. Many French officers marvelled that Soult did not at once push a counter-attack in this direction; and Wellington evidently expected it. "There I am," he said to Pakenham, "with nothing between me and the enemy." "Well, I suppose you will order up the Light Division now," said Pakenham. "I'll be hanged if I do," retorted Wellington.[3] Freire's attack was in fact hopeless of success as an isolated operation; and, whatever may be said of his conduct in beginning it prematurely, the failure of his troops was no discredit to them. They were only imperfectly disciplined, and the task set to them was such that Colborne confessed that he would have been sorry to undertake it with two Light Divisions. Meanwhile for two mortal hours the Spaniards were out of action and it was plain that Beresford's would be, like Freire's, an isolated attack.

It was apparently at about noon or rather later[4] that the head of Beresford's columns reached the Caraman road, and wheeling to the right began their deployment into three lines, Pack's and William Anson's brigades

[1] *Supp. Desp.* viii. 740.

[2] French accounts mention this manœuvre (Lablache ii. 491), and it is confirmed by Sergeant Anton (*Retrospect of a Military Life*, p. 126).

[3] Moore Smith's *Life of Lord Seaton*, p. 205.

[4] Lablache conjectures 11.30, but, if Beresford was at Mont Blanc when Friere opened his attack, his columns must have taken a full hour to reach their station and deploy.

forming the right and left respectively of the first line, supported by Lambert's and Ross's in second line, and by the Portuguese of Douglas and Vasconcello in third line. The manœuvre, however, took some time, for, the head of Beresford's column having outmarched the rear, Cole's division had wheeled westward before Clinton's could come up, and thus Cole's right flank was for a time uncovered. The 21st Chasseurs therefore trotted down the Lavaur road to menace this flank, compelling Cole to throw out his provisional battalion[1] for its protection until Clinton, who had deployed without halting in order to make the greater haste, came up to his allotted station. But even so Beresford had reached the attacking point without his artillery, which, owing to the state of the roads, he had been compelled to leave at Mont Blanc. Soult on his side had for nearly an hour been at the point opposed to them, and had himself disposed Taupin's division for the counter-attack; placing Rey's brigade to south of the Sypière redoubt, which was still very far from completed and contained no guns, and Gasquet's brigade to north of the smaller neighbouring work. He thus made the groups of entrenchments a centre between the two brigades, with six of Berton's squadrons on the outer flank of Rey, the 21st Chasseurs on the outer flank of Gasquet, and a single battery,[2] sent by Maransin, in support. The whole were concealed behind the crest of the hill after the manner of Wellington himself. 1814. April 9.

Pack's brigade was still in the act of forming line when Soult cried, "Here they are, General Taupin; I make you a present of them."[3] Taupin, like the voltigeur general Jardon, was happiest when doing subaltern's work in the skirmishing line. With some trepidation he took command of Rey's brigade, and led it down in close column to the south of the Sypière

[1] Four companies each of the 2nd and 2/53rd.

[2] Taupin's divisional artillery had been left in the Great Redoubt.

[3] "Les voilà, Général Taupin, les voilà. Je vous les livre."

1814. redoubt, thus offering its flank in some measure to
April 10. Anson's brigade, and at the same time masking the fire of Maransin's battery near the redoubt. Having made this blunder he lost his head completely and, instead of charging down upon the British, gave the word to halt and deploy. A few rockets, new and unknown projectiles, threw the French into disorder, and Lambert's brigade, having completed its formation, opened together with Anson's brigade a very heavy fire. Taupin fell mortally wounded. His leading regiment gave way, and the whole of Rey's brigade ran back to the crest. The battalion that held the Sypière redoubt abandoned it in a panic before a charge of the Sixty-first; and Gasquet's brigade, which had hardly been engaged, fell back in the same direction as Rey's towards the hamlets of Bataille and Sacarin on the reverse side of the heights, closely pursued by the light companies of the Sixth Division. An attempt of the French cavalry upon Clinton's right flank was parried by throwing out the Seventy-ninth in square; and Soult's whole plan of counter-attack was ruined. Upon the knoll where these hamlets stand the defeated brigades met Taupin's divisional artillery, which had been brought there on the initiative of its own commander. Leseur's brigade of Darmagnac's division was already in position at this point; Rouget's brigade of Maransin's division came out to prolong the line from the knoll to the Pont des Demoiselles, Maransin's battery returned safely from the heights; and thus a new and irregular line was formed from the summit of Calvinet through Sacarin to the Pont des Demoiselles fronting more or less to the east.

The instantaneous success of this attack—for the action appears to have lasted only a few minutes—did not tempt Beresford to hasten his onslaught upon the remaining entrenchments. He was aware of the disastrous repulse of the Spaniards, and deemed it imprudent to risk the slightest possibility of failure. Therefore, summoning his guns to join him from Mont

Blanc, he led his troops no further forward than to the Lavaur road, along which line he halted the Sixth Division upon the summit of the hill ; while the Fourth Division, with Somerset's and Vivian's brigades of cavalry to protect its left flank, took post on the western slope beyond the hill over against the French position on the knoll of Sacarin. There was now a long lull. The firing died completely away ; and Picton, who had seen the rout of the Spaniards, apprehended from this ominous silence that Beresford also might be in difficulties. It may be that his memory reverted to the storm of Badajoz, where the assault upon the breaches had failed, and his own escalade had succeeded. Be that as it may, he conceived it to be his duty to convert the feint attack, which had been enjoined upon him, into a real attack ; and unlimbering two guns on the road which skirts the western side of Petit Gragnague, he launched Brisbane's brigade, supported by Power's Portuguese, to the storm of the bridge-head of Ponts Jumeaux. A few brave men reached the foot of the work and assembled in the re-entrant angle, where the French plied them with showers of stones ; a few more swept round the entrenchment and passed under the arch of the first bridge. Both parties were easily overpowered ; for the main body gave way in disorder before the blast of grape and musketry from the defenders. Thrice Picton renewed his assault, and thrice he was repelled with a total loss of some three hundred men, including Colonel Forbes of the Forty-fifth killed and Brisbane himself wounded. Picton's British battalions were weak ; and his second brigade had been detached to the bridge of Minimes when the Light Division had been withdrawn to stay the rout of the Spaniards. He therefore desisted from his ill-advised diversion owing to sheer inability to continue it, which was indeed well, for it had proved to be a costly failure.[1] 1814. April 10.

[1] Both Napier and Lablache place Picton's attack earlier in the day ; but, though his biographer is rarely trustworthy, his explana-

1814. April 10. Meanwhile the Spaniards after two hours of hard work had been rallied and re-formed, and Wellington returned to his original idea of a simultaneous onset by Beresford and Freire. The French array now presented three sides of a square, from Sacarin north-eastward to Mas des Augustins; from Mas des Augustins north-westward to the Great Redoubt; and from the Great Redoubt westward to the bridge of Matabiau. The two salient angles, at the Mas des Augustins and the Great Redoubt, were the points selected for assault; the former being held, it will be remembered, by Harispe's division, less the battalion that had been driven from La Sypière, and the latter by Villatte's division. Clausel had further at his disposal Vial's cavalry brigade to aid in the defence.[1] There was, however, much delay in entering upon this second phase of the action, for the Portuguese batteries upon the knoll of Pujade had fired away all their ammunition, and it was long before their stock could be replenished; while Beresford's guns were still with great labour toiling up to the plateau of La Sypière. They had not yet arrived[2] when at half-past two the order was given to renew the attack, the Spaniards against the Great Redoubt and the Sixth Division against the Mas des Augustins. Of this second onset of the Spaniards there are contradictory accounts. Napier implies that it was but feeble. Harry Smith, who was present and close by, asserts on the contrary that it was both heavy and energetic, and

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tion that Picton only violated his orders when he heard the firing cease seems natural and reasonable. The *Journal of an Officer in the Commissariat* (p. 321) confirms this view; and as this officer was attached to the Third Division, his evidence is of weight.

[1] Napier says that one of Maransin's brigades was also in this part of the field: but I can find no authority to confirm this. One of Maransin's brigades was in the suburb of St. Cyprien, the other at Sacarin.

[2] So says Napier, who is confirmed more or less by Anton (*Retrospect of a Military Life*, p. 132). Wellington's despatch could be construed to mean that the attack was renewed when Beresford's guns came up.

must have been successful if supported by the Light Division. Wellington, however, was afraid to commit prematurely the only reserve that he possessed; and the Spaniards were for the second time repulsed from the Grand Redoubt. 1814. April 10.

From the Lavaur road the attack was opened by the advance of the Forty-second and Seventy-ninth, the former upon the Mas des Augustins, the latter upon the Calvinet Redoubt, with the Ninety-first and 12th Portuguese in support. The Forty-second does not appear to have been well handled. Pack's order was for the battalion to attack by wings. The left wing was drawn up in the hollow road immediately facing its objective, and could have leaped out and dashed forward at once, leaving the right wing to follow. Instead of pursuing this simple procedure Colonel Macara faced the right wing to the right, counter-marched it past the rear of the left wing and round its left flank, and then again counter-marched it across its front. The first counter-march was more or less sheltered by the hollow road; but the second was necessarily performed under the full blast of the French fire, both of musketry and of artillery;[1] and the right wing was terribly shattered owing to this foolish piece of pedantry. However, Macara at last gave the word "Forward, double quick," and the Forty-second running forward at the top of their speed, swept Harispe's conscripts out of the Mas des Augustins at the first rush. The Seventy-ninth simultaneously captured the Calvinet Redoubt; and the work of Pack's brigade seemed to be done. But Harispe, speedily rallying the 115th, 34th and 81st, fell fiercely upon the Mas des Augustins; and the Forty-second, broken and disordered by success and heavy losses, gave way almost immediately and ran along the road towards the Calvinet Redoubt. Here they communicated their panic to the Seventy-ninth, which likewise evacuated its captured stronghold, but, quickly rallying, made its counter-attack and recovered both

[1] These guns had been withdrawn from the Mas des Augustins.

1814. redoubts. It seems, however, that the Highlanders
April 10. were again driven out; and it was not until Lambert's brigade also had been thrown into the fight that Harispe's men, disheartened by the fall in succession of Harispe himself, and of his second, General Baurot, at last gave way and retreated to the rear of the knoll of Sacarin.

It was now four o'clock. Beresford's two batteries had at last reached the top of the heights, though with little ammunition, and opened fire with great effect upon the Grand Redoubt. Picton had renewed his attacks, unsuccessfully as before, upon the Ponts Jumeaux and the bridge of Minimes. Beresford with his exhausted troops was preparing to assail the last of the French entrenchments at the northern extremity of the hill, and the Spaniards were making ready to second him as best they might, when at five o'clock Soult ordered Villatte to evacuate the Grand Redoubt, which he did at his leisure, bringing off by hand the guns whose teams had been killed, and entering the suburb of St. Étienne at six o'clock. At nightfall the divisions of Darmagnac, Maransin and Taupin were still in occupation of the knoll of Sacarin and the broken ground that extended thence to the Pont des Demoiselles. One brigade of Travot's reserve was astride the Montaudran road and the rest of the army within the cincture of the canal. On the British side Cole's division bivouacked to north of the Montaudran road, and the brigades of Vivian and Somerset were extended along the line of the canal southward from the city. There was some bickering of musketry on this side and about the Ponts Jumeaux until dark and even later, but nothing of importance. The bulk of the Allied army crowned the heights of Calvinet.

On the morrow Soult wrote to Clarke that he should not stir for that day; and Wellington was in no situation to compel a movement until he could bring further supplies of ammunition over the river. This tedious operation occupied the whole of the 11th; but mean-

while the British cavalry pushed eastward to Caraman 1814.
and southward almost to the bridge of Baziège, by April 11.
which the road from Toulouse to Carcassonne crosses
the Languedoc canal. Carcassonne was the meeting-
place which Soult had appointed for the junction of
Suchet's army with his own ; and realising that, unless
he took his departure at once, he might be shut up in
Toulouse, the Marshal decided to evacuate the town at
nightfall. He did so accordingly, and by eight o'clock
on the morning of the 12th the whole of his troops, April 12.
except such of the wounded as were too ill to be moved,
had crossed the bridge of Baziège. Wellington had
intended crossing the canal behind Toulouse on this day ;
but, learning of Soult's retreat, he sent Arentschild's
cavalry, followed by the divisions of Clinton and Cole,
through La Bastide de Beauvoir towards Baziège, near
which the German hussars overtook Pierre Soult's rear-
guard and captured thirty prisoners. Ponsonby's and
Bock's brigades, together with Hill's corps, took the
route by Castanet upon the same point ; and the whole
bivouacked for the night between La Bastide and
Villenouvelle. The French van on this day reached
Castelnaudary, and the main body Villefranche and
Avignonet ; but Soult halted short of Carcassonne on
the 13th to learn what was going forward at Paris. April 13.
On the 12th two messengers, one English and one
French, arrived at Wellington's head-quarters at
Toulouse to announce the fall of Napoleon and the
establishment of a Provisional Government. They
were at once sent on to Soult, who received them on
the 13th. After some delay, owing to the Marshal's
desire to ascertain exactly how matters stood—a delay
which Wellington was inclined to abridge by an advance
of his army on the 17th—a suspension of arms was
signed on the 18th, and the operations between the April 18.
two main armies came to an end.

It would be unprofitable to add to the controversy whether or not Wellington won a victory at Toulouse. His attack, as I have said, virtually amounted to the

1814. April. storm of the outworks of a fortress. He drove the enemy from those outworks, and in thirty-six hours would have assaulted the body of the place from its weakest point, had not Soult wisely decided to evacuate it and retreat. But it may freely be confessed that this was the most unsatisfactory action that Wellington ever fought, and the worst managed. The initial step of making a flank march of two miles within cannon shot of the French position could never have been undertaken except in presence of an enemy demoralised by frequent defeats ; and, even then, it was so delicate and dangerous an operation that success could hardly be expected unless as part of a perfectly combined attack at other points. Yet, through misfortunes and misconduct of subordinate leaders, all combinations fell to the ground ; and the simultaneous onset which had been projected was realised only as three isolated and disjointed assaults, two of which were repulsed with heavy loss.

Freire's breach of orders was probably due to the national failing of *jactancia*, taking the form, in this case, of anxiety to show that Spanish soldiers could storm a position without the help of the British. The result was disastrous, for Freire sacrificed over eighteen hundred of his eight thousand brave men to no purpose. Picton was never averse from butting his head against a wall when the glory of the Third Division was in question, and he probably rejoiced in finding an opportunity for so doing. It may be urged in his excuse that a divisional commander must use his own judgment, and that the cessation of fire after the repulse of the Spaniards was certainly ominous of disaster ; but, even so, one fails to see what possible advantage could be gained by hurling men against an alert enemy ensconced within strong fortifications in broad daylight. Such an attack cannot be called a diversion, and it was far from being of profit in this case, for some four hundred men were thrown away with no greater compensation than the loss of fifty killed and wounded to the French.

The blunder was serious, for it reduced Wellington to the Light Division as his sole reserve; and, if Soult had remained in Toulouse on the 12th and withstood an assault, it might have been more serious still. 1814. April.

But, to turn to a pleasanter side of the battle, the conduct of the Sixth Division was superb. The whole of the work fell upon them, and they did it magnificently though with terrible loss. The flank march alone entailed heavy casualties, and, when that was accomplished, each of the brigades was called upon for two assaults. Colonel Coghlan of the Sixty-first was killed; Pack, Colonel Cuyler of the Eleventh and Colonels Douglas and Bermingham of the Portuguese service were wounded. The Forty-second lost twenty-six officers and three hundred and eighty-six men killed and wounded, and the Seventy-ninth, out of just under five hundred of all ranks engaged, lost eighteen officers and two hundred and fifteen men. The Sixty-first, whose casualties numbered one hundred and seventy-five, was brought out of action by the adjutant, assisted by two ensigns; all field-officers, captains and lieutenants having been killed or wounded. The Sixty-first, Eleventh and Thirty-sixth, in fact, worthily upheld the reputation which they had gained at Salamanca. The total casualties in the Allied Army were four thousand two hundred, of which about eighteen hundred were Spanish, about five hundred and thirty Portuguese, and about eighteen hundred and fifty British. The losses of the French appear not to have exceeded two thousand, of which number sixteen hundred wounded, including Generals Harispe and Baurot, were abandoned to the Allies at Toulouse.

But, though the principal campaign thus came to an end, there was still to be bloodshed before Bayonne. Since the 27th of February there had been no fighting before that place; and, though Wellington had on the 6th of March given instructions for bringing up heavy cannon from Passages, Hope had expressed his opinion that, looking to the difficulties of transport, the fortress

1814. would be as readily reduced by blockade as by siege.[1]
April. Wellington therefore advocated at least the reduction of the citadel, but from one cause or another it was the
April 13. 13th of April before the siege-train arrived. Meanwhile a kind of tacit armistice existed in and about Bayonne; and, save for scarcity of provisions and of minor comforts, with much desertion in consequence, everything within the fortress went on as if in profound peace. The Governor Thouvenot ascribed his long inaction to bad weather and the urgent necessity for completing his imperfect defences; but he decided to make a sortie on the 4th, and only a violent storm kept him from carrying out his purpose. A few days later Talleyrand's emissaries passed through Bordeaux on their way to Soult, and sent word to Hope of the fall of Napoleon; but Sir John merely passed on this news informally to the French officers at the outposts, awaiting definite orders from Wellington before he should forward any official communication to Thouvenot. That General, however, may have thought the intelligence to be merely a blind in order to increase desertion and distract notice from the preparations for a siege; and he resolved to make his sortie in the early hours of the 14th. His object was to clear the blockading troops away from the junction of the roads that lead from Bayonne to Bordeaux and Toulouse; and a force of five to six thousand men was distributed into three columns for the purpose. Of these the right column was to march from the redoubt north of the suburb of St. Esprit upon the village of St. Étienne; the left, starting from two works left of the citadel, was to march towards the cross-roads; and the centre was to sally out when the other two columns had nearly reached their destination, seize the cross-roads and drive back the besiegers along the Bordeaux road.

In the course of the night two deserters came into the British lines, and gave warning of the coming attack; and the First Division was under arms by

[1] *Supp. Desp.* viii. 654.

three o'clock in the morning. Maitland's brigade of Guards was stationed below the glass factory of St. Bernard, which building had been carefully fortified by Lord Saltoun of the First Guards, so as to check any incursion of the enemy towards the bridge of boats. Stopford's brigade was lined along the bye-road that led from St. Bernard to the cross-way ; and Hinüber's brigade of the German Legion was stationed behind St. Étienne. Hay's brigade of the Fifth Division had been brought over temporarily to Boucau, on the right bank of the Adour, to act as a reserve, but the picquets on the left, that is to say the east, of the British position were supplied by this brigade, and Hay himself was the general in charge for the night. 1814. April 14.

The sortie opened with a feint on the south-west towards Anglet, while the French columns moved at a running pace and without firing a shot upon the British advanced posts. Such was their impetuosity that they broke through the line of British picquets at the first rush, and in quarter of an hour were in possession of the cross-way ; the left column occupying the St. Bernard road as far as Montégut, the centre holding the Bordeaux road for three hundred yards beyond the cross, and the right ensconcing themselves in the village of St. Étienne. Everything at first went wrong with the British. Hay was killed early at St. Étienne, exhorting his men to defend the church to the last. Hope, riding down the bye-road from Boucau towards St. Étienne, found himself in the middle of the French infantry. His horse fell, pierced by three bullets, and pinned him to the ground ; and Sir John, together with two of his staff, was wounded and all three were taken. The picquets in this same road, which was deeply hollowed and in many places enclosed by garden-walls, were cut off from their main body, and after desperate fighting were mostly killed or captured. The night was pitch dark, and the gloom was only deepened by the flashes of the French guns in the citadel, which covered the sortie by a heavy fire. Some time necessarily elapsed before

1814. General Howard, who succeeded to the command,
April 14. could take the fight in hand ; but meanwhile the enemy were already checked at two points. On the British left Captain Foster of the Thirty-eighth with a handful of men defended a single house in St. Étienne with invincible tenacity, and would not be dislodged ; and in the centre another party still held the Jewish cemetery immediately to west of the cross-way, and shot down the French sappers who were trying to fill in the British trenches.

Presently General Hinüber, who had been summoned by Hay before his fall, brought up his Germans to St. Étienne, and by a vigorous counter-attack drove the French from the village, rescuing Foster's gallant little band, of which the greater part had already fallen killed and wounded. Howard also directed Maitland to assail the hollow road from the west, and Colonel Guise (who through the disabling of Stopford was in charge of the Second brigade of Guards) to move upon it from the east. The Third battalion of the First Guards and the First battalion of the Coldstream accordingly advanced unseen until in position to attack, when the main body lay down to avoid the fire of the cannon in the citadel, and the skirmishers ran out to engage the enemy. After a sharp engagement both battalions leaped to their feet and charged. The French, fearing to be cut off from the road, ran back, heavily punished by a flanking fire as they passed. As they retreated from St. Étienne also a gun was brought forward to play upon their flank with terrible effect. Soon after seven o'clock the fire ceased, and both sides took account of their losses. Those of the French amounted to nine hundred killed and wounded, and thirteen prisoners ; those of the British to six hundred and seventy-eight killed and wounded, including thirty-three Portuguese, and two hundred and thirty-six prisoners, almost to a man British. The Coldstream Guards were the regiment that suffered most severely, having one hundred and sixty hurt or

slain, while the Third Guards came little short of them with one hundred and fifty-six casualties. The bulk of the prisoners also came from the ranks of the Guards, their picquets having been cut off by the first rush of the enemy. 1814. April 14.

Altogether this was a very bloody little combat, for there was much actual fighting with the bayonet—a rare occurrence—and the bayonet is the deadliest of weapons. That it should have taken place at all was most lamentable, for the issue at stake between France and coalesced Europe had already been decided and could not be altered by any number of sorties. Wellington in his sweeping fashion stigmatised Thouvenot bluntly as a blackguard. The epithet seems hard and makes too little allowance for the French point of view. Thouvenot was a faithful soldier of Napoleon, who could not be expected readily to accept the news of his master's abdication, or to imperil one of his fortresses upon the authority of an informal report. He would naturally be suspicious to excess of such reports, for —the unpleasant truth must be told—the officers of Napoleon's army, taking their cue from their chief, did not deal honourably with their enemies nor even with their friends. Sufficient proof of this statement may be found in the trick by which Murat obtained possession of the bridge over the Danube at Vienna in 1805, by the infamous treachery whereby Napoleon seized some of the Spanish fortresses in 1808, and by the fact, rarely quoted but inexorably true, that French officers even of the highest rank made no scruple of violating their parole when prisoners of war. People who make a principle of not keeping faith stand in preternatural dread of the wiles of others, and Thouvenot was no exception to this rule.

Nor did the attitude of the French officers during an informal truce after the sortie show them or their commander in the most favourable light. They expressed, possibly with genuine feeling, the greatest dismay at the tidings of Napoleon's abdication, but treated the late

1814. engagement as a matter of no importance and as a mere military promenade. Moreover, Thouvenot, declining to listen to any proposal for a suspension of arms, maintained a menacing attitude which necessitated the utmost vigilance on the part of the Allies, until at last on the
April 27. 27th of April he received Soult's official commands that hostilities were to cease. The conclusion seems inevitable that Thouvenot's offensive action was dictated principally by the yearning to proclaim himself unconquered, or in other words by jealousy for the honour of himself and of the French arms. It cannot be said that he gained his desire, for, though the Allies suffered very heavily, the French suffered more heavily still and accomplished absolutely nothing towards the raising of the blockade. Moreover, though we may freely grant that Thouvenot's sentiments were very far from ignoble, we may legitimately question whether they were worth the sacrifice of some hundreds of brave men, French as well as British. This, however, is a matter upon which French and English cannot be expected to agree, and which must therefore be left open to the end of time. It is, however, to be regretted that the final episode of this long and arduous contest, in the course of which French and English soldiers had learned not only to respect but almost to like each other, should have been a fight which left bitter feelings between victors and vanquished, because it was brought about by a pride, which is not very easily to be distinguished from vanity, rather than by the necessities of war.

CHAPTER XIX

At the close of 1813, it will be remembered, the Americans could place to their credit one substantial gain, the destruction of Captain Barclay's fleet upon Lake Erie. This the British had countered on land by the reconquest of the whole of the lost peninsula of Niagara and the capture of Fort Niagara on the American frontier. Thereby they acquired the absolute control of the harbour of refuge where the river Niagara enters Lake Ontario, and a fortress lying on the flank of any American force that might attempt the invasion of Canada. The winter of 1813–14 was unusually mild and open, which practically frustrated all operations on both sides, owing to the extreme difficulty of transport by land in the absence of frozen snow. In January Drummond proposed to march seventeen hundred men by land from the Niagara frontier to Detroit, cross Lake Erie on the ice to Put in Bay Island, and seize the two English prizes *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte* which had been taken by Perry and left in that anchorage. The plan was a sound one, and would have redressed the balance of naval power on Lake Erie in England's favour; but it proved to be impossible of execution because the water was still unfrozen. On the American side for the same reason as little was done. Wilkinson on the 13th of February broke up the cantonments in which he had remained since his ridiculous campaign of 1813, and divided his force into three parts, two of which took up quarters at Plattsburg and Burlington upon Lake Champlain, and

1814.

1814. the third under General Brown went to Sackett's Harbour. He was followed up in his retreat by a small British column, which captured from him a hundred sleigh-loads of supplies and stores.

Throughout the early months of the new year Prevost petitioned earnestly for reinforcements. His best regiments had been reduced by heavy losses to comparative inefficiency; and a promise, which had been given to him in August, that three new battalions would arrive early in the spring, seemed likely to be empty of effect, since its fulfilment depended upon the arrival of troops from the West Indies after they had been relieved from England. Moreover, the reinforcements last sent to Prevost were of inferior quality, being composed of convicts from the hulks and other undesirable characters, who deserted in numbers when good opportunity offered. In the circumstances he had decided to summon the second battalion of the Eighth Foot to march over land from Fredericton, New Brunswick, to Quebec, a distance of from three to four hundred miles, which the men traversed on snow-shoes through intense cold and occasional violent storms, arriving at the beginning of March in a condition which called forth high compliments from the General.

March. At length in the same month the Americans opened their new campaign. Mr. Armstrong, the Secretary for War, anticipated, not without reason, that Prevost intended if possible to re-establish himself on Lake Erie, though Sir George could not hope to do so without unduly weakening the garrison either of Kingston or of Montreal. Armstrong's perfectly correct view was that the principal effort of the Northern army should be directed against one or other of these two points, so as to sever communication between Upper and Lower Canada; and, though he had been persuaded to deviate from this plan in the previous year, he was now resolved to execute it. On the 20th of February therefore he sent two sets of instructions to General Brown at Sackett's Harbour. The one, which was intended to

come to the knowledge of the British, directed that the 1814.
General should move with two thousand men by way of March.
Batavia to Buffalo, in order to recover Fort Niagara.
The other, which was strictly secret, prescribed that he
should march across the ice and endeavour to surprise
Kingston, the garrison of which was said, probably with
correctness, to have dwindled to twelve hundred men.
Misunderstanding the purport of Armstrong's orders
and judging himself too weak to attack Kingston,
Brown marched sixty miles towards Batavia, and then
seized with misgiving, hurried back to Sackett's Har-
bour, consulted Commodore Chauncey as to Armstrong's
true meaning, and on his advice returned again to
Buffalo.

The incident would not be worth the chronicling,
had not Brown's movements inspired General Wilkin-
son with a spurious activity. Though Wilkinson was
Brown's senior officer, Armstrong had given him no
hint of his subordinate's operations; but, on hearing
of them by common report, Wilkinson judged it his
duty to make a diversion in Brown's favour. Ac-
cordingly on the 19th of March he advanced north- Mar. 19.
ward from Plattsburg with three thousand men to
the river Lacolle, where the British had converted a
stone mill into a fortified post. Arriving before this
petty stronghold on the 30th, he detached six hundred Mar 30.
men to cut off the retreat of the garrison, and opened
fire upon it from three field-guns. Greatly to his
surprise the defenders, one company of the Thirteenth
under Major Handcock, and another of Canadians,
showed no disposition to run away. On the contrary,
being reinforced by the flank companies of the Thir-
teenth and another company of Canadians, Handcock
actually took the offensive and charged the American
guns. He was twice repulsed, but stoutly maintained
his position till evening, when Wilkinson turned his
back upon the British and solemnly retreated to Platts-
burg. The casualties of Handcock's gallant little party
barely exceeded sixty, of which forty-two fell upon the

1814. grenadier company of the Thirteenth alone. Wilkinson's
Mar. 30. losses were heavier,[1] though slight; but so ludicrous a failure as his was too much even for the Americans. He was removed from his command, and succeeded by General Izard.

So far, though Armstrong had indicated the right line of operations, little had been done towards pursuing it; and as it chanced, affairs on the British side were equally in a state of paralysis. Failing supplies made marine supremacy on Lake Ontario more than ever necessary for them; and Drummond, who had from the first been eager for an attack upon Sackett's Harbour, pressed for the project with increased energy in
April. April. Owing to greater rapidity in building new vessels, Commodore Yeo's squadron was at the moment superior to that of Chauncey, who recognised the fact with no small anxiety. Four thousand troops, however, were the fewest that could be employed against Sackett's Harbour with any hope of success, and this number was greater than Prevost was able, or at any rate willing, to spare. Prevost, as it seems to me, was wrong, for the capture of the American naval base on Lake Ontario would have disorganised all the arrangements of the enemy; and an object of such supreme importance was worth a great effort and the running of unusual risks. Baulked of his purpose, Drummond decided to turn his expedition against Oswego, where, owing to the mildness of the winter, large quantities of guns and munitions had been accumulated by water to await transport to Sackett's. Chauncey, however, had taken the precaution of detaining the cannon and equipment in a safe place twelve miles up the Oswego river; and, the Americans having got wind of Drummond's intentions, Brown, who had again returned to Sackett's, detached three hundred men to reinforce the garrison of Oswego. On the 3rd of May Drummond and Yeo embarked

[1] Edgar, in *Ten Years in Upper Canada*, states them circumstantially at 13 killed, 123 wounded and 30 missing. Mahan gives the figure at over 70, which is more likely to be correct.

something over a thousand men[1] at Kingston; and, after some delay through variable winds and gales, a few marines, the flank companies of Watteville's, and the light company of the Glengarries were landed under a heavy fire from the British men-of-war. The guns of Oswego received them with a heavy cannonade; but in ten minutes the fort was stormed, the garrison as they retired up the river sinking three heavy guns and a quantity of naval stores. Seven heavy guns, besides four of lighter calibre, were taken, together with some ammunition, and the British returned to Kingston with their trophies — two small schooners, two thousand barrels of provisions, and a quantity of cordage—all gained at a cost of ninety-five killed and wounded. 1814. May 3.

This, so far as it went, was well; though owing to Chauncey's foresight, the object of the expedition had been only half accomplished. Still, the heavy cannon that were required for Chauncey's new ships could only be moved by water to Sackett's Harbour, and Yeo used all his skill in distributing his squadron so as to intercept them. Chauncey, therefore, caused the guns to be placed in *bateaux* which could creep along the coast from creek to creek, with a small force of riflemen and Indians following them afloat and ashore to defend them if they should be compelled to take refuge from attack in any inlet. On the 28th of May these *bateaux* dropped down the river to Oswego, and in the night began their voyage northward on the lake. By noon the little fleet had reached Big Sandy Creek, only eight miles distant from its ultimate destination at Stony Creek, from whence the guns could be drawn overland into Sackett's. Here the *bateaux* entered the river and anchored two miles from its mouth to await information; but two of their number were missing, having wandered away in the dark and been captured by the British small craft which were patrolling the coast. The officer, Commander Popham, in charge of these last, May 29.

[1] 6 cos. of Watteville's, 1 co. of Glengarry L.I.; 1 batt. of Marines; det. of artillery.

1814. on learning from his prisoners what was going forward, collected three gun vessels and four smaller boats, manned them with two hundred seamen and marines,
May 30. and at daylight of the 30th entered Big Sandy Creek, having landed parties upon either bank to secure his flanks.[1] The American commander, Captain Woolsey, who had been duly warned of their coming, was able to conceal superior forces on the flanks of the advancing British, which closing in upon their rear cut off every man that was ashore. After losing over forty killed and wounded, the remainder of the British marines and seamen, seeing that resistance was hopeless, surrendered. The affair was in itself a petty one; but its results were great, for they ensured to Chauncey the armament for his new ships, and therewith the certainty of being able to meet the British squadron, for a time at any rate, with equal and, indeed, superior strength. Popham was tried by court-martial, but was rightly acquitted, for so great an object as that which he sought was worth the great risk which he accepted. Yeo, however, finding his scanty complements diminished by two hundred good men, was furious. He decided to abandon the blockade of Sackett's Harbour, and to stand on the defensive pending the completion of a new ship of one hundred and two guns, which was already building and would assure him naval superiority.

June. June was now come, and the Government of the United States at length formulated its plan of campaign for the summer. Once again it was decided to make the principal effort in Upper Canada, against Mackinaw and the Niagara Peninsula, instead of against Kingston and Montreal. How Secretary Armstrong was induced to abandon his own correct strategical views does not appear. He combated at least the project of wasting force upon Mackinaw, when the capture of York, which

[1] Mr. Lucas describes the advance of these parties as made in a somewhat foolhardy fashion. On the contrary Popham seems to have taken every possible precaution consistent with the weakness of his force.

was the object of the expedition on the Niagara frontier, would in itself cut off and reduce the distant fort on Lake Huron; but he eventually submitted to the superior ignorance of his colleagues. It was therefore determined that five thousand troops and three thousand volunteers under Brown should, under protection of part of the Erie squadron, be landed on the north coast of the lake between Fort Erie and Long Point, some eighty miles to west of it, and advance northward against Burlington Heights, so as to sever the British communications between their forts on the Niagara and York. The rest of the Erie squadron was to escort an armament of about a thousand men to Mackinaw. As subsidiary operations General Izard was to make a diversion against Montreal from Plattsburg; and fifteen armed boats, supported by posts from Izard's army, were to interrupt the passage by water between Kingston and Montreal. Thus the object which should have been primary was made secondary, and that which should have been secondary was made primary, according to the approved practice of the amateur strategist. 1814. June.

Prevost for his part had both in March and May been dabbling in negotiations for an armistice, hoping no doubt to suspend hostilities pending the termination of the war in Europe, which event might dispose the United States to agree to an amicable settlement. The idea did not commend itself to Yeo, who was consulted by Prevost, nor to the British Government, which did not receive any report of the proceedings until after the conclusion of the Peninsular War; but, as Sir George's efforts came to nothing, there is no object in dwelling further upon them. Meanwhile it must be noted that no reinforcements reached Prevost until June, when they began to arrive from various quarters; the Sixteenth and two companies of artillery from Cork at the beginning of the month; the Nineteenth from the West Indies; and the Sixth and Eighty-second from the Peninsular army at the end of June. Prevost had been so often disappointed over the coming of promised

1814. succours that he could not divine what force would be
June. at his disposal for the coming campaign, and was compelled to be cautious in his dispositions. Drummond, confidently expecting that Niagara would again be the centre of operations, begged urgently for reinforcements; and, though ultimately he proved to be correct, Prevost not unreasonably did not share his opinion. In two successive years the Americans had undoubtedly committed the blunder of attacking at the wrong point, but there could be no certainty that they would repeat this folly for a third time. On the contrary, since they had been steadily purging away incompetent commanders ever since the beginning of the war, it was to be apprehended that they might have hit upon a capable general at last; and there could be no doubt as to the military policy that would commend itself to such a man.

Be that as it may, Prevost was in no position to
July. reinforce Upper Canada until the middle of July; and indeed the difficulties of supply in the exhausted province of Ontario were such that a general might well have hesitated to pour new troops into it. In addition to the soldiers there were some three thousand Indians, who had retreated with Proctor, and several hundred homeless refugees to be fed, insomuch that the rations issued to non-combatants were thrice as many as the numbers of the armed force. By dint of great personal exertions and much journeying between York and Kingston Drummond contrived to fill the mouths, both useful and useless, that depended upon him; but at the opening of July his whole force from York on Lake Ontario to Long Point on Lake Erie did not greatly exceed four thousand men. Of these over one thousand were at York itself; seven to eight hundred were in Fort Niagara; eighteen to nineteen hundred at Fort George, Queenston, Chippewa and Fort Erie; something under three hundred at Long Point; and four to five hundred at the important connecting station of Burlington Heights. A great many men were on the

sick list through fever and ague, owing to excessive fatigue and exposure. 1814. July.

Brown was not much better off than Drummond in the matter of men. His five thousand regulars and three thousand volunteers had dwindled to a nominal total of something less than five thousand white men of all descriptions, of whom thirty-five hundred were fit for duty, and six hundred Indians. His regular soldiers, however, had for some months past been carefully trained by competent officers, and were greatly superior to any American troops that had hitherto taken the field. Deciding to ignore the menace of Fort Niagara to his communications, Brown crossed the Niagara river in two divisions above and below Fort Erie on the night of the 2nd of July ; and in the evening of the 3rd received the bloodless surrender of the garrison of Fort Erie itself. This, considering the small numbers of the British in the field, was a serious mishap. Either the post should not have been held at all, or its commander, Major Buck of the Eighth, should have defended it to the last; and it is clear that Buck did not do his duty. On the 4th Brown pushed General Scott's brigade twelve miles northward to Street's Creek, a small stream two miles south of the Chippewa, which was the first British line of defence, pressing back the British advanced parties before him. In rear of the Chippewa, which is fifty yards wide, General Riall—in the absence of Drummond at Kingston—had collected a force of about eleven hundred regulars and three hundred militia and Indians, and would have attacked Brown on that very day but that he was expecting the arrival of the Eighth from York. As things were, he contented himself with pushing forward a squadron of the Nineteenth Light Dragoons and two companies of the Hundredth to reconnoitre, and was not deterred from his purpose by the intelligence that the enemy force was superior to his own. Drummond, indeed, after the experience of his last campaign, had instructed him that he might take liberties with the July 3. July 4.

1814. American infantry; nor could Riall divine that the
July 4. troops before him were much superior to any that the British had yet encountered, and that they were no longer led by such feeble creatures as Hull, Dearborn, Smith and Wilkinson, but by a fighting commander.

July 5. On the morning of the 5th the Eighth came up, having made a forced march from their landing-place; and at four in the afternoon Riall crossed the Chippewa with his whole force and three guns. He then advanced southward in three columns, covered by an advanced guard, with his left on the Niagara river and his right flank shielded against attack from the forest by a flank guard of Indians and militia. As it happened, Scott at the same moment was moving northward from Street's Creek, not with any idea of fighting, but in order to drill his men in the open space between the two streams. A thin belt of forest stretching across this cleared ground concealed the two forces from each other; and Riall's flanking party penetrating through this belt, began to annoy the advanced parties which screened Scott's left. General Brown, who was in front reconnoitring, thereupon ordered up his Indians and militia, who thrust back Riall's regulars, but upon emerging at the further side of the belt were met by the light companies of the British regulars and militia, and driven off in hopeless rout. Brown, realising the situation, at once galloped away to fetch the remainder of his army, shouting to Scott as he passed to prepare for an engagement.

Hastily throwing a battalion into the wood to cover the retreat of the flying Indians and militia, Scott drew up the remainder of his brigade with its right to the Niagara river, while Riall continued to advance clear of the belt of wood, thus laying bare his own right flank. Scott's left flank being likewise in the air, Riall unlimbered his three pieces to play upon the enemy's right, and leaving the Eighth, apparently, to support the guns, formed the Royal Scots and Hundredth to attack the American left. Scott met this manœuvre

by filing his left wing away still further to his left, 1814.
until he overlapped the two British regiments, when he July 5.
deployed it and opened fire. This deployment was executed by the Americans with admirable regularity, and seems to have anticipated that of the First and Hundredth, who however met them steadily enough, though the American fire was seen to be superior. Both sides now advanced, halting from time to time to pour volleys into each other until Brown's remaining brigade was seen coming up upon Scott's left; whereupon Scott, being thus assured of support, wheeled up his left wing so as to edge his opponents closer into the fire of his right wing. Riall made a last effort to save the day by summoning the Eighth to his right, and ordering the First and Hundredth to charge; but the two gallant regiments being caught under a cross fire, suffered so severely that he was fain to call them off and to retreat, covering an orderly retirement with the Light companies and the Eighth.

The change of conditions indicated by this little action was alarming for the British. Not only were the casualties of Riall's force far in excess of the American losses—five hundred and fifteen as against three hundred and thirty-one [1]—but in actual fact Riall had been beaten by Scott's brigade alone, which had no preponderance in numbers.[2] It is true that Scott, being assured of the support of Brown's remaining brigade—that of Ripley—could throw the whole of his troops into action at once, whereas Riall was obliged to hold the Eighth in reserve, so that the British commander was justified in saying that he contended with an enemy numerically superior. The manœuvres in the combat, despite of the details given in the autobiography of Scott and in Riall's report, are obscure; but there is no doubt that the British troops behaved admirably, as

[1] British loss: 148 killed; 321 wounded; 46 missing.
American loss: 56 killed; 239 wounded; 36 missing.

[2] The casualties of Scott's brigade were 44 killed; 224 wounded.
The casualties of Ripley's brigade were 3 killed; 3 wounded.

1814. is sufficiently attested by the losses of the First and
July 5. Hundredth,[1] which amounted to close upon half of their numbers. Still the British were beaten, and it was evident that the experience of two campaigns had at last turned the Americans into soldiers who were not to be trifled with. Drummond's position therefore became most critical. At the outset his men had been none too many, and now they had been diminished by nearly seven hundred, not far from one-fifth of the entire force. Moreover, the loss of Detroit in the previous year had left his right, or western flank, unprotected, and rendered a precarious situation doubly insecure.

After the action Riall fell back upon Chippewa, unmolested by the Americans; but Brown, following him up, turned the position and compelled the British
July 10. to retire towards Burlington. On the 10th Brown reached Queenston, and there for some days he halted, eagerly awaiting the arrival of Chauncey's fleet to bring him heavy guns, cut off the British communications by water, and co-operate generally in bringing the campaign to a decisive issue. Chauncey, however, who had announced that he would sail on the 1st, gave no sign of doing so, but, to the dismay of his Government no less than of Brown, found pretext after pretext for delay, and in fact did not leave Sackett's until the 1st of August. Meanwhile Brown waited in painful
July 15. suspense. On the 15th he made a reconnaissance in force, which moved round Fort George as far as Lake Ontario, but failed to entice Riall from his lines. On
July 20. the 20th he moved his entire army before Fort St. George and began to throw up siege-works; whereupon Riall, seriously alarmed, sent pressing requests for reinforcements to Drummond at York, but still

[1] 1/1st. 1 off., 62 men killed; 10 off., 125 men wounded; 30 men missing = 228.

100th. 2 off., 67 men killed; 9 off., 125 men wounded; 1 off. missing = 204.

There were no unwounded prisoners.

refrained, though with an effort, from coming out to fight. After waiting for two days Brown on the 22nd retired to Queenston, and Riall advanced with seventeen hundred regular troops and about a thousand militia and Indians to Twenty Mile Creek. On the 23rd Brown learned definitely that it was hopeless to look for Chauncey's arrival; and on the 25th he fell back to Chippewa, designing to march rapidly thence upon Burlington Heights and York. Thus matters stood at a deadlock; and the only important incident at this time was the wanton burning of the villages of Queenston and St. David's by the American militia. Brown, to his honour, dismissed the officer who had ordered the destruction of St. David's; but the mischief had been done and was destined to produce serious consequences.

1814. July 22. July 23. July 25.

On the 22nd Drummond returned from Kingston to York, bringing with him four hundred of the Eighty-ninth and the flank companies of the Hundred and Fourth, which had been relieved by the arrival of the Sixth, Eighty-second, Nova Scotia Fencibles and one wing of the First[1] in the St. Lawrence two days earlier. Without delay he planned an offensive stroke against Brown's communications from Fort Niagara, and with that object sent the Eighty-ninth and his flank companies to that fort on the 23rd; ordering the commandant, Colonel Tucker, to strengthen himself further by drawing men from the posts on the other side of the river, and to move with some fifteen hundred men upon Brown's advanced base at Lewiston. The operation was appointed to take place at daylight of the 25th; and Riall was directed simultaneously to advance against Brown, but to decline a general action unless it were forced upon him by the enemy, in which case Tucker was to cross the water to his assistance. At dawn of the 25th Drummond himself arrived at Fort Niagara, when, ascertaining that Riall had already made a forward

July 22. July 25.

[1] 4th batt., lately on service with Graham at Bergen-op-Zoom; Prevost to Sec. of State, 12th July 1814.

1814. movement, he modified his orders; transferring the
July 25 Eighty-ninth and some of the detachments to the command of Colonel Morrison with instructions to move through Queenston to the support of Riall, and leaving Tucker only some five hundred soldiers, together with some seamen and Indians, for the march upon Lewiston. The seamen were taken from four small vessels which, looking to Chauncey's inactivity, Yeo had ventured to spare to carry troops, supplies and stores to Niagara. "Without their help," wrote Drummond some days later, "I should certainly not have been able to attempt offensive operations so soon after my arrival."

These changes caused some delay in the march of Tucker, who upon reaching Lewiston at noon found that the Americans had already retreated, carrying with them their guns, but abandoning tents, stores and provisions, which fell into the hands of the British. Tucker then ferried his troops across from Lewiston to Queenston, where they joined hands with Morrison's, which had awaited them at that point. After a halt, most of the Forty-first and Hundredth regiments were sent back to the forts, and Drummond with the Eighty-ninth, the light company of the Forty-first and detachments of the First and Eighth—some nine hundred of all ranks—at about four o'clock continued his march. Riall had, meanwhile, at midnight of the 24th-25th pushed forward an advanced guard of about a thousand men under Lieutenant-colonel Pearson, and these at seven o'clock occupied a hill by Lundy's Lane, about a mile to northwest of the Niagara Falls. The rest of Riall's force waited under arms at Twelve Mile creek, some eight miles to westward, until noon, when some fifteen hundred men with four guns were ordered to join Pearson. The whole of these movements on the Canadian side were unknown to Brown, who, however, was informed, apparently rather late, of Tucker's raid upon Lewiston; when fearing that it might be extended to a more important American depôt at Fort Schlosser, he decided

to make a diversion by advancing upon Queenston. 1814.
At a little before five accordingly General Scott's brigade July 25.
came upon Pearson's detachment, the strength of which had evidently been underestimated by the American scouts; for Scott hesitated to attack, and despatched a message to Brown for reinforcements. Riall, on his side, mistaking Scott's brigade for Brown's whole force, ordered his main body from Twelve Mile Creek, which was still three miles distant, to take up a position on Queenston heights, and himself directed the retreat of Pearson's detachment to that point. On the way he met Drummond, who took personal command of Pearson's troops and turned them back to reoccupy Lundy's Lane, sending word to the main body from Twelve Mile Creek to hasten with all speed to the same point.

The position of Lundy's Lane consisted of a low hill, about a mile in length from east to west by less than half a mile in depth from north to south, which rises to a height of about twenty-five feet above a long gradual slope. It was traversed from east to west by the road known as Lundy's Lane, and was bounded on each flank by two more roads which ran parallel to each other from north to south, the more easterly being the road to Queenston. The southern and eastern slopes were covered with wood, and on the side of the river were skirted by swamps also, which gave some imperfect protection to the eastern flank; but, weak though the position was, it was the only one south of Queenston Heights that offered an advantage for resisting a hostile advance from the south. Had General Scott pushed his force boldly forward he might easily have secured the hill; but dreading an ambush he had felt his way cautiously towards it, and was still six hundred yards distant, when Drummond with some seventeen hundred men crossed the summit. Unlimbering two five-pounders upon the highest point, Drummond formed his line in rear of them and on the reverse slope of the hill; the Glengarry regiment

1814. July 25. on the extreme right bestriding the cross-roads on the western side, with a part or the whole of the Royal Scots, Forty-first, Eighty-ninth and Eighth in succession upon the left of the Glengarry. The left flank of the Eighth rested on the Queenston road, with a battalion of militia beyond it; and one troop of the Nineteenth Light Dragoons stood on the road to their left rear.

The array was slightly concave in form, and had hardly been completed when at half-past six Scott came up with his own brigade only, and, making a demonstration along the whole front, detached a column through the woods against Drummond's left flank. After the lapse of an hour this detachment fell upon the militia battalion, which formed the extreme left of Drummond's line, and drove it back, together with the little party of the Nineteenth Light Dragoons, in some confusion. Several prisoners were taken; and General Riall, who was wounded at this juncture, being carried in the wrong direction owing to the growing darkness, fell into the hands of the enemy. The militia quickly rallied, however, forming *en potence* along the Queenston road, and effectually secured Drummond's left flank from further danger. Meanwhile the first of Brown's reinforcements came up, and were thrown by Scott against the British centre; but the attack was repulsed after severe fighting with heavy loss, and Drummond remained in possession of the hill.

It was now between eight and nine o'clock, and there was a lull in the action except for a duel of artillery, while both Generals busied themselves in re-forming their array for a fresh combat. By this time the whole of Brown's army had arrived, and the detachment from Twelve Mile Creek had at last joined Drummond, much harassed and fatigued by a long day of marches and counter-marches. The British General, fearing for his right flank, extended his line on that side by placing the seven companies of the Royal Scots on the right of the Glengarries, and the flank companies of the Hundred

and Fourth on the right of the Royal Scots. He formed the remainder in second line, a few companies of the Eighth in the centre, with some militia on their right, and the Hundred and Third, which was a young regiment, on their left. Brown on his side drew up two battalions in dead ground at the foot of the hill, and directed them to storm the British battery, which had now been increased by a third gun. The Americans rushed forward gallantly enough. The battalion which advanced over the open was repulsed with heavy loss; but the other crept up through the woods to a log-fence within twenty yards of the British cannon, poured in a volley, charged, bayoneted the gunners while in the act of loading, and then turned the pieces against the British line. More infantry followed them, and the American artillery likewise ascended the hill at a gallop. One gun, having lost all its drivers by a volley, was carried by the horses into the ranks of the British and was secured; but this for a time was the only success upon Drummond's side. 1814. July 25.

Bringing up his four remaining guns, he endeavoured to restore the fight; and these and the American pieces fired almost muzzle to muzzle. They were taken and retaken, and the combat resolved itself into a savage struggle between small units and individuals for the summit of the hill. All order was lost in the darkness; battalions, companies and even sections became intermixed, and the fight was carried on with the bayonet, with the butt, with any weapon that came to hand. Brown and Scott were both of them wounded and disabled. Drummond also was severely hurt, but continued in command. For three long hours the battle continued, the Americans, apparently, retaining the summit of the hill, but unable to carry off the British guns or to improve their advantage under the incessant fire of their enemies. At last, just before midnight, Brown ordered General Ripley to draw off his troops and retreat to Chippewa, and at dawn the British reoccupied the crest and recovered their guns.

1814. July 25. Superior discipline had told, and the victory—such as it was—rested with them.

This was the best contested fight of the whole war. If we are to accept American figures,[1] the numbers engaged were nearly equal—about twenty-eight hundred of all ranks on each side—with a slight preponderance of regular troops in favour of the Americans, and a superiority of seven guns against two in favour of the British. The casualties of the British numbered eight hundred and seventy-eight, of whom eighty-four were killed.[2] Those of the Americans, according to their official report, did not exceed eight hundred and sixty, of whom one hundred and seventy-one were killed. In the matter of the numbers actually killed and wounded the Americans by their own showing exceeded the British by nearly one hundred; but, whereas Drummond reported the capture of several hundreds of prisoners, the American return of missing shows no more than one hundred and seventeen. Drummond may certainly have been guilty of exaggeration; but on the whole I distrust the American figures, both as to casualties and as to their strength on the field; and I incline to the belief that they had certainly four thousand men present, and that they lost a thousand of them. Trophies were almost evenly divided, the Americans carrying off one British gun, which they mistook for one of their own, and leaving two of their own behind them. The brunt of the action fell upon the Eighty-ninth, which went into action about four hundred strong and lost two hundred and seventeen killed and wounded, and upon the Royal Scots, who added one hundred and thirty hurt and slain to the two hundred and seventy who had already fallen at Chippewa. Altogether it was a stout little fight, honourable alike to Americans and British.[3]

[1] Mahan, ii. 312.

[2] British loss: 84 killed; 559 wounded; 193 missing; 42 prisoners. American loss: 171 killed; 572 wounded; 117 missing.

[3] American writers are fond of asserting that some of the Peninsular veterans were present at Lundy's Lane. This is, of course, untrue.

On the following day General Ripley advanced by Brown's order to bring off his dead, wounded and artillery. Finding the British in occupation of the field he immediately retired, broke down the bridge over the river, threw the greatest part of his baggage, supplies and stores into the rapids, and retreated with much haste and not in the best order to Fort Erie. Drummond's light troops and Indians followed him and made a few prisoners; and Ripley busied himself in enlarging and strengthening the defences of the fort in anticipation of an attack. Drummond, after repairing the bridge and receiving reinforcements which raised his numbers to over three thousand men, likewise advanced, and on the 3rd of August invested Fort Erie. The place was formidable with new earthworks and batteries, extending from the fort to the edge of the lake, and flanked on the side of the river by the guns of Black Rock, and on the side of the lake by three gun-boats. On the night of the 3rd Drummond made an unsuccessful attempt to surprise Black Rock; and two days later the besieged were heartened by the arrival of General Gaines to supersede Ripley in chief command. On the same day a more formidable enemy arrived in the shape of Commodore Chauncey with his squadron, who promptly intercepted and drove ashore a British brig, and, leaving three of his vessels to watch for British small craft in the Niagara river, sailed back to the blockade of Kingston. This was discouraging, for Drummond had already broken ground and begun to raise a battery before Fort Erie; but without naval command of Lake Ontario he was likely to run short of ammunition. On the night of the 12th Captain Dobbs of the Royal Navy attacked the three vessels on Lake Erie in open boats, capturing two of them and chasing away the third; and Drummond, having opened fire on the 13th, gave orders for the delivery of the assault before dawn of the 15th.

1814. July 26. Aug. 3. Aug. 5. Aug. 12. Aug. 13.

Fort Erie, as constructed by the British, stood about an hundred yards from the shore, where the Niagara

1814. Aug. river flows out of Lake Erie. The Americans had extended the defences eastward by earthworks to the strand, erecting a stone fort named the Douglas battery at the water's edge, and southward also by half a mile of earthworks to a sandy knoll called Snake Hill, from which point the shore of the lake begins to turn westward. This knoll likewise was crowned by a battery, and connected with the water by a line of palisades. The whole of this enclosure was covered by ditches and abatis, and was garrisoned—though of this Drummond was not aware—by a force exceeding his own in numbers. General Drummond decided to attack in three columns. The strongest of these, thirteen hundred in numbers, under Colonel Fischer of Watteville's, was to assail Snake Hill; the second, about two hundred and fifty strong, under Lieutenant-colonel Drummond of the Hundred and Fourth, was to carry the old fort; and the third, of about six hundred and fifty men, under Colonel Hercules Scott of the Hundred and Third, was to fall upon the Douglas battery.[1]

Aug. 15. At two o'clock in the morning the attack was opened by Fischer, who had removed the flints from his men's muskets in order to ensure silence and surprise. A few men of the two flank companies turned the line of palisades by wading through the lake; but the mass of them were checked by the abatis, and, giving way under a storm of shot from the American muskets and rifles, threw the supports, which in the darkness had entangled themselves in difficult ground by the water, into hopeless confusion. Watteville's regiment broke, carrying away with it in its flight nearly all the remainder of the column; and the small parties which had entered the lines, being unsustained, were compelled to fall back. At the sound of the cannonade

[1] Fischer's column: Watteville's, 8th; light cos. 89th and 100th; a few cavalry and artillery.

Drummond's column: flank cos. 41st and 104th; dets. bluejackets and marines.

Scott's column: 2 cos. Royal Scots; 103rd.

the two remaining columns moved forward to their work. That of Scott was driven back with heavy loss by the fire of the Douglas battery, and joined that of Lieutenant-colonel Drummond in the assault of the old fort. This last attacked with the greatest resolution, and after three repulses succeeded in establishing themselves in one of the bastions, from which they turned the guns upon the Douglas battery. The Americans strove desperately to dislodge them, but in vain. All seemed to be in good train, when a store of ammunition which had been accumulated in the bastion was accidentally, as it seems, exploded, and blew the bastion and the whole of its occupants into the air. Panic followed instantaneously. The survivors of the column ran back in disorder, and General Drummond was fain to throw out the Royal Scots for the protection of their retreat, and to abandon the entire enterprise. 1814. Aug. 15.

The British casualties amounted to nine hundred and five, over five hundred men being returned as missing, who were probably killed or wounded by the explosion. The heaviest of the loss fell upon the Hundred and Third, which, with nearly one hundred and forty wounded and over two hundred and eighty missing, was practically annihilated, and upon the flank companies of the Forty-first, whose casualties exceeded eighty. Watteville's also suffered severely, nearly one hundred and fifty officers and men having fallen ; but this regiment was considered, justly or unjustly, to have behaved ill. "Had the troops of Fischer's column been steady only for a few minutes," wrote Drummond, in a sentence which was omitted from the despatch printed in the Gazette, "the enemy must have fled from his works and have surrendered." A corps composed of mercenaries of all nations, Poles, Germans, Dutch and Portuguese, was not likely to have the same cohesion as a British battalion ; but no troops in the world are exempt from the peril of panic, especially when their own fugitive comrades crash into them in the darkness. Drummond

1814. Aug. was certainly unlucky, for his men actually penetrated the American works at two different points, and might well have held their own at the old fort but for the accident of the explosion. But these are mere commonplaces of the fortune of war. Night attacks upon fortified positions are in the last degree hazardous and uncertain, and this particular night attack was a disastrous failure. The Americans stated their loss to be one hundred and twenty-eight, and, whether this figure be correct or not, their casualties cannot in any case have exceeded one-fourth of the British. Gaines and his troops had every reason to plume themselves upon their success.

Reduced to impotence through the weakening of his force and the interruption of his communications by water, Drummond was practically obliged to turn the siege into a blockade. The first reinforcements from the Peninsular army—the Sixth and Eighty-second—had arrived in the St. Lawrence early in July ;[1] but, though forwarded up country with all possible speed, the Eighty-second, owing to the wretched state of the roads, did not reach Drummond until the 29th of August, nor the Sixth until the 2nd of September. Supplies and stores, however, could only be brought by water, and, though Drummond continued the construction of batteries within closer range of the American works, he was short of ammunition and very anxious about victuals. From the first week of September the blockade of Kingston became rigorous ; and even the passage from York to Niagara was so unsafe that Drummond dared not call up further reinforcements lest he should be unable to feed them. Commodore Yeo, for his part, refused to move until the great ship which was to assure him of naval superiority should be completed ; and his policy is perfectly intelligible. But naval superiority was, after all, only a means to an end ; and there was always the danger lest, while the means were preparing, the end might be sacrificed. To add

[1] Prevost to Sec. of State, 12th July 1814.

to Drummond's difficulties the season was wet and unhealthy; and unceasing sickness among the troops from this cause and from want of provisions inclined him more and more to raise the siege and retreat to Chippewa. His resolution was hastened by the action of Brown, who at the beginning of September had resumed command of the American army. 1814. Aug. Sept.

The British batteries were three in number, situated in the midst of thickets, about five hundred yards distant from the American lines and a mile and a half from Drummond's main encampment. On the afternoon of the 17th of September, when the batteries were in charge of the Eighth and Watteville's, Brown made a sortie with two thousand men, sending one column under General Porter through the woods round the British right and rear, and keeping a second column under General Miller hidden in a ravine before the British centre. The movement was exceedingly well executed. Porter managed to approach unperceived very near the British right-hand battery; and, Miller simultaneously penetrating the line of picquets between it and the centre battery, the two columns converged upon the right-hand battery and mastered it in a few minutes. After destroying the guns, the two commanders proceeded against the centre battery, which, after a sharp resistance, was also captured. Before serious damage could be done to the guns, however, Drummond's reserves came up; and the Royal Scots, Sixth, Eighty-second and Eighty-ninth, with the Glengarries, speedily swept the enemy out of the captured works and back to their entrenchments, with the loss of rather over five hundred killed, wounded and prisoners. The casualties of the British in this counter-attack barely exceeded two hundred, showing that the Americans were still unable to meet veteran troops in the field; but of the Eighth and Watteville's two hundred and fifty were taken prisoners, besides over one hundred slain or hurt, which raised the British loss to a total of six hundred and nine. Since three British guns also had been destroyed the Sept. 17.

1814. balance of advantage in this affair lay decidedly with the Americans.

Sept. 21. Four days later Drummond, though he had lately been strengthened by the arrival of the Ninety-seventh, broke up his camp and retreated to Chippewa. Thirteen days of incessant rain had not only swelled his sick list alarmingly, but had undermined the foundations of Fort Niagara and Fort George. Reinforcements could reach the army only by driblets; and the difficulties of insecure communication harassed him perpetu-

Sept. 24. ally. On the 24th he fixed his head-quarters at the falls of Niagara, cantoning his troops along the line of the river from Black Creek to Lake Ontario, with Chippewa for the point of concentration. Brown made no attempt to follow him, mistrusting his own weakness; and the two

Oct. 5. forces remained supine, until on the 5th of October General Izard with his army arrived at Lewiston from Lake Champlain. His coming was due to the confused strategical notions of Secretary Armstrong. At the end of July this gentleman had suggested that Izard should advance against either Montreal or Prescott, as a diversion to save Brown in case larger reinforcements should be sent to Drummond. The news of Brown's retreat, however, altered the situation; and on the 12th of August Armstrong suggested that Izard should march to Sackett's Harbour, and embark two thousand men there for Fort Erie. It is difficult to see the object of this movement. Brown was in no danger—he had in fact represented Lundy's Lane to be a victory—for the Americans held the command of the water on Lake Ontario; and, so long as they did so, Drummond's situation was precarious. On the other hand on Lake Champlain there was much to be feared, for British infantry from France had been pouring into the St. Lawrence during the first part of August, and was not likely to remain idle. However, Izard meekly obeyed, marched four thousand men to Sackett's Harbour, embarked twenty-five hundred of them there on the 21st of September, landed these at the Genesee on the

south shore of Lake Ontario on the 22nd, and on the 1814. Sept.
27th met Brown in consultation at Batavia. As the result of this conference Izard, who was the senior officer, decided to besiege Fort Niagara, and to that end marched for Lewiston ; but at a second council of war it was determined to concentrate on the American side of the Niagara river south of the Chippewa, and to undertake no sieges until Drummond's force had been accounted for.

On the 10th and 11th of October Izard passed his army Oct. 10.
over the Niagara near Black Rock ; and, encamping two miles from Fort Erie, marched down stream on the 13th upon Drummond's lines at Chippewa. Drummond Oct. 13.
watched him with perfect equanimity, for the British front was unassailable, their left flank covered by the Niagara, and the country on their right impassable except by infantry, to meet which he had a superior force of artillery. Izard came up before the British position on the 15th, reconnoitred it in force, and, Oct. 15.
disliking the appearance of it, retired again to Fort Erie in abject helplessness. On the next day he heard that Oct. 16
Chauncey had withdrawn his fleet to Sackett's Harbour and was throwing up defensive works, that officer being unwilling to wait for the coming of Yeo's new ship, the *St. Lawrence*, which on the 14th of October was at last fit for commission. Izard, conscious that much would be expected of him with a force of six thousand fairly trained troops, wrote querulously to Armstrong bemoaning his hard fate in wanting an enterprise upon which to employ them. It never occurred to him at any time to leave Brown to contain Drummond at Chippewa and, transferring his own force to Lake Erie, to threaten the British rear from Grand River or Long Point. On the 21st of October he broke up his camp, sent Brown with Oct. 21.
his troops to Sackett's Harbour, and began to transfer his own force to the American shore. On the 5th Nov. 5.
of November he blew up Fort Erie, and withdrew altogether from British territory. Four days earlier, by a curious irony, Yeo had sailed for Niagara with

1814. supplies, stores and a reinforcement of twelve hundred men,[1] all of which arrived too late.

So ended the campaign of 1814 in the west. There had been other petty operations on the remoter lakes in the course of the year. After sundry misfortunes to the British ships on Lake Erie in the earlier months of 1814, the naval situation had been restored and even improved by the valour and audacity of Lieutenant Worsley of the Royal Navy; and Lieutenant-colonel Macdonall had successfully routed an expedition which had ascended the Mississippi against Mackinaw. Late in October a party of seven hundred marauding Kentuckians started from Detroit with the idea of destroying the Canadian resources in that neighbourhood, and if possible of penetrating to the head of Lake Ontario at Burlingham Heights. They were, however, turned back, before they had traversed more than half of the ground, by a menace of British troops, and accomplished no more than a considerable amount of pillage and devastation, which probably suited them better than fighting. But all these incidents, though they ended almost invariably in the discomfiture of the Americans, were only by-issues of little importance to the contest in the peninsula of Niagara. There the Americans, though the quality of their troops and leaders had greatly improved and the improvement had been marked by two indubitable successes, had failed for the third consecutive campaign to accomplish anything. This in itself was discreditable; but far worse was the fact that the supreme director of operations in Washington had allowed himself to be distracted by a petty reverse on the western frontier into the removal of troops from the vital point, within striking distance alike of Montreal and Kingston, to the eastern head of Lake Erie. Such a blunder deserved punishment at the hands of Prevost; and we must now see what attempt he made to take advantage of the situation.

[1] 37th; dets. of 6th and 82nd; 1 co. R.A. Prevost to Sec. of State, 1st Nov. 1814.

By the end of August Sir George had not far short of sixteen thousand British soldiers in Lower Canada, seven battalions of which, numbering about six thousand men, had come straight from Wellington's army in France.[1] In writing to announce the despatch of these troops Lord Bathurst informed Prevost that yet more battalions were assembling for direct attack on the American coast, and that, while not recommending any hazardous forward movement, the Cabinet hoped to see him take the offensive before the close of the campaign. The objects commended to his notice were two : first, protection, which signified the entire destruction of Sackett's Harbour and of the enemy's naval establishments on Lakes Erie and Champlain ; and, secondly, permanent security, which was explained to mean the maintenance of Fort Niagara and of sufficient adjacent territory, and the occupation of Detroit and the Michigan country.[2] This letter reached Prevost before the 14th July, enabling him to send Watteville's regiment at once to Drummond ; and, as the transports began to enter the St. Lawrence at the beginning of August, he contemplated opening his campaign for the destruction of Sackett's and the occupation of Plattsburg in conjunction with the fleets on Lakes Ontario and Champlain on the 15th of September. 1814. Aug.

As regards Lake Champlain he purposed particularly to avoid any offensive movement on the eastern shore, because the State of Vermont was strongly opposed to the war, and had furnished large supplies both of specie and cattle to the British army. Two-thirds of the troops in Canada were in fact fed on beef provided by American contractors and drawn chiefly from Vermont

[1] The battalions that came from France, over and above the 6th and 82nd already mentioned, were 1/3rd, 1/5th, 1/9th, 3/27th, 1/39th, 57th, 1/58th.

[2] Bathurst to Prevost, 3rd June 1814. Captain Mahan and Mr. Lucas both say that they have been unable to find this despatch. It is in the Record Office with the rest of the Secretary of State's despatches. C.O. 43, vol. 23.

1814. and New York.[1] Meanwhile, as the battalions arrived
Aug. from the Garonne, Prevost encamped them between the Richelieu and the St. Lawrence; and by the 25th of August three brigades, under the supreme command of General de Rottenburg, were stationed along this line.[2] But Prevost had already realised that Yeo's squadron would not be ready to dominate Lake Ontario until October, or practically until three weeks later than he had expected. The first duty of the squadron must needs be to carry reinforcements and supplies of all kinds to Drummond, which would mean that offensive operations against Sackett's Harbour must be delayed for yet another week. By that time the campaigning season would be so near its end that the propriety of even beginning such operations at all would be highly questionable.

In the circumstances Sir George judged it best to send Sir James Kempt, who had arrived from France, with one brigade to Kingston, to be ready to take command of the attack upon Sackett's, and in the meanwhile to devote his own attention to Lake Champlain. The Americans had still naval superiority upon this lake; but on the 25th of August a new British vessel, the *Confiance*, had been launched at Isle aux Noix, which was designed to be more powerful than the strongest of the American ships, and would, it was hoped, be ready for service in three weeks. On the 30th Prevost inspected his first brigade at Chambly,
Aug. 31. and, proceeding on the 31st to Odell's Town, within a mile of the American frontier, heard there of Izard's march to Sackett's with four thousand men. This unlooked-for piece of intelligence decided him to advance at once without waiting for the co-operation of the fleet, in the hope of forcing Izard to return and

[1] Prevost to Sec. of State, 27th Aug. 1814.

[2] Cavalry, 19th L.D.
Power's Brigade: 1/3rd, 1/5th, 2/27th, 1/58th.
Robinson's Brigade, Brisbane's „, Kempt's „: 2/8th, 1/9th, 13th, 3/27th, 39th, 49th, 76th, 88th; De Meuron's Canadian Chasseurs.

of thus making a diversion in Drummond's favour. 1814.
Accordingly crossing the frontier he, on the 3rd of Sept. 3.
September, occupied an entrenched camp at Champlain on the Great Chazy, which was abandoned by the enemy at his approach, and on the 4th moved on to Sept. 4.
the Little Chazy, where his supplies were to be landed. Here he saw the naval commander, Captain Downie, who assured him that the flotilla would be ready to co-operate with the army within forty-eight hours, and that, from all that he could ascertain concerning the American squadron, there need be little misgiving as to the issue of a naval action. On the 6th, therefore, Sept. 6.
Prevost advanced in two columns to Plattsburg, a march of twelve miles only, but rendered laborious by the obstruction of felled trees and ruined bridges, with which the American commander sought to impede his progress. Some attempt was made to induce the American militia to offer resistance, but in vain, the British columns brushing them contemptuously aside without even condescending to deploy. By the afternoon the entire force of the enemy had retreated to a strongly fortified position on the south side of the river Saranac.

It is said that Prevost proposed to attack the works immediately, but desisted upon the representation that one of his brigades was too much fatigued by a rapid march from Chazy to be fit for immediate action.[1] If so, it was a pity that he did not act upon his opinion at all risks. The departure of Izard had left his successor, General Macomb, with only fifteen hundred effective regular troops and about the same number of recruits and convalescents; and to this scanty force only seven hundred dispirited militia had as yet been added.[2] Prevost himself had some eleven thousand men, most of them of the finest quality; and one half of them should certainly have sufficed to sweep the enemy away. The Saranac itself was fordable; and three redoubts

[1] *Life of Sir George Prevost*, p. 143.
[2] Izard said that he had left 3000 regular troops at Plattsburg.

1814. with block-houses and connecting field-works held by
Sept. raw levies would hardly have stopped veterans, who had carried the entrenchments of the Nivelle. The American flotilla was, it is true, anchored within range of the shore, ready to enfilade the attacking columns with its cannon; but the country, being wooded and intricate, would probably have masked the fire to a great extent; and, if Prevost were prepared in the first instance to ignore the ships, the reasonable inference is that their intervention was not greatly to be feared. Moreover, the heights once taken, the flotilla would speedily be driven to the open water by the British guns. On the other hand it was of little advantage to deprive the American ships of the shelter of the batteries ashore, unless the British squadron were at hand to engage them. However, Sir George waited until the
Sept. 7. morning of the 7th, when perceiving that the American ships had taken up a new anchorage at a greater distance from the shore—beyond cannon-shot as he estimated—he summoned Downie to join him at once, if his squadron were fit for action, and set his men to erect batteries and siege-guns. Prevost's point—and his reasoning was perfectly sound—was that the American fleet and army were not within supporting distance of each other, and might be destroyed in detail.

Downie, who had already brought his ships to Lacolle, twenty-five miles north of Cumberland Bay, against wind and current, answered that it would be a day or two before the *Confiance* would be fit for action, but that no time would be lost, as he could employ the
Sept. 8. interval in working up to Chazy. On the 8th Prevost again wrote to Downie that he was only awaiting the arrival of the squadron to make his attack; and now Downie answered more curtly that the *Confiance* was still unready, and would remain at Chazy until his guns were mounted. Meanwhile American militia streamed daily into Macomb's camp, augmenting his force and
Sept. 9. enabling him to strengthen his defences; and on the 9th Prevost sent a third nagging letter, acquitting Downie

of all intentional delay but plainly revealing his own impatience, and stating that according to the reports of deserters the American fleet was inefficiently manned. Downie replied briefly that he should weigh at midnight, and expected to round into Cumberland Bay at dawn of the 10th. "In manning the flotilla and ships we are many short," he added; "I have made application to the officer commanding at Chazy for a company of the Thirty-ninth to make up." The company was supplied, strange to its work, strange to the officers, strange to everything; but a strong head wind prevented the squadron from making any way; and Prevost, who had held his columns in readiness to storm since six o'clock in the morning, was fain to withdraw his troops and address to Downie a fourth irritating letter expressive of his disappointment. "I ascribe it to the unfortunate change of wind," he wrote, "and I shall rejoice to learn from you that my expectations have been frustrated by no other cause." Greatly hurt by this undeserved imputation of dilatoriness, Downie answered verbally to Prevost's messenger that he was responsible for the squadron and did not mean it to be hurried into action until it was fit to fight; but, speaking later in the day to his second in command, he declared that he intended to convince the General that the naval force would not be backward in the attack. Before dawn of the 11th the squadron weighed anchor with a fair wind and stood up the narrow channel towards the lake.

1814. Sept. 10. Sept. 11.

In his last letter to Downie, Prevost stated that his troops had been held ready to storm the enemy's works at nearly the same moment as the naval action should commence in the bay. "Nearly the same moment" is a vague phrase, but Downie after verbal communication with Prevost's messengers understood it to mean that the army would assault simultaneously with the opening of the naval attack, that the American squadron would thereby be compelled to quit its anchorage, and that in the consequent confusion the British ships would have a

1814. Sept. 11. decided advantage. Prevost had thrown up two heavy batteries on the shore to keep the American gun-boats at a distance in case they should stand in to annoy his flank ; but if, as he maintained, the American squadron was out of range from his guns, it is not clear why his attack should cause the ships to move. If he should master Macomb's position, which was nearer to the hostile fleet than was his own, he might turn the American heavy ordnance, which he would capture there, upon them ; though even then it is uncertain whether they would have been within range. Thus it is not clear whether Prevost intended the navy to help the army, or the army to help the navy. But beyond question he was working above all things for a naval victory ; and, from the fact that Downie was instructed to announce his approach by a discharge of signal guns, it would be reasonable to conclude that the attack on land was to precede that on water.

At five o'clock in the morning Downie fired his signal guns, and, heaving to at 7.30 near the entrance to Cumberland Bay, went forward in a boat to reconnoitre the enemy's squadron. This was anchored in single line ahead north and south across the middle of the bay, with all the skill that was to be expected from its brave and capable commander, Commodore Macdonough. Downie then made his dispositions to engage the enemy, and, rounding Cumberland Head at about nine o'clock, stood into the bay. Prevost, meanwhile, guessing that a fair wind would certainly bring the British squadron into action, visited his second in command at daybreak, and directed the troops to cook their breakfast and to be ready for the assault. Simultaneously with the opening of fire by Downie, Prevost's batteries engaged and silenced the only American battery that bore upon the water. Orders were sent to the brigades of Robinson and Power to move down under cover of the forest to a ford wide on the left of the American position, and to Brisbane's brigade to approach the bridge opposite to the enemy's

centre. Robinson and Power accordingly set their battalions in motion, but, being misled by their guide, were obliged to counter-march, and thus lost at least an hour in arriving at their point of action. They then forced the ford, and were in the act of advancing through the wood, when a message arrived from Prevost to break off the engagement and to retire. 1814. Sept. 11.

The reason for this sudden order was cogent. The squadron under Downie's orders after two hours and a quarter of incessant fighting had been totally defeated. Downie himself had been killed in the first few minutes of the action; his second in command was a prisoner, and his flagship had hauled down her flag in a sinking condition. In the circumstances Prevost rightly judged it useless waste of life to persist in his attack, and decided to fall back at once. Without a fleet any military advantage would have been worthless, and every day's delay would have made his position more difficult. Desertion, always considerable in America owing to the temptation offered by American agents, was increasing. Provisions were scanty and, owing to the failure of water-transport, likely to become scantier. The only roads lay through swamps, and, by reason of the weather and the obstructions made by the enemy, were almost impassable. Lastly, the American militia was gathering in masses all round the British. Prevost, therefore, with sound judgment retreated on the 12th, abandoning a certain quantity of stores which he had no means of removing. His casualties during the advance, the action and the subsequent retreat amounted to twenty officers and two hundred and twenty-three men killed, wounded and missing. Sept. 12.

The navy was furious at this mishap, and raised such an outcry against Prevost that he was recalled to be tried by court-martial. The gist of the charge against him was that he had hurried the fleet into battle before it was ready, in disadvantageous circumstances, and for no particular object; and that he had upset the whole of Downie's arrangements by failing to make

1814. Sept. 11. his attack at the concerted time. It is certain that the *Confiance*, still uncompleted, and with an untrained crew that had not spent even a week together to enable them to know their officers and each other, was unready for action. It is certain also that Downie, whether Prevost intended it or not, had interpreted the General's last letter as an insinuation of backwardness on the part of the navy. It is quite possible that Prevost designed this missive to be a spur only and not a taunt; nor is it surprising if he did think the naval service somewhat dilatory, for Yeo had lost the whole of the campaigning season on Lake Ontario by the delay in fitting out the *St. Lawrence*, and Downie seemed likely to lose it on Lake Champlain through his slowness in equipping the *Confiance*. That the naval officers can be held responsible for such delay is, however, in the highest degree doubtful; and so far Prevost may be blamed for putting undue pressure upon Downie. As a military officer the General was quite incompetent to pronounce whether a ship was or was not ready for immediate service, and upon such a point he should certainly have deferred to the representations of the naval commander. It must be admitted also that Downie's squadron, though superior to Macdonough's in the open, was inferior when attacking the Americans in a carefully selected defensive position. But that Downie's defeat was due to Prevost's failure to attack the American entrenchments ashore seems to me a proposition that cannot be maintained.

The whole issue turns upon the question whether Macdonough could be compelled by any of the batteries, American or British, upon the shore to weigh anchor and shift position, or, in other words, whether his squadron was or was not anchored within cannon-shot of the land. Careful enquiry was made of the American commanders, with a view to Prevost's trial, and Macomb answered unequivocally in the negative. Macdonough stated that his squadron lay a mile and a half from the batteries; and, as he moved out from a station closer inshore on

the night of the 6th, it is a reasonable inference that he considered a mile and a half to be a safe distance. Whatever may be said to the contrary, it is inconceivable that a prudent and capable commander, such as Macdonough was, should deliberately have taken up an anchorage from which he might be driven, to all intent at his enemy's own good time, into the jaws of a superior fleet.[1] This being so, it is evident that, whether misled by Prevost's staff-officers or not, Downie completely misconceived the situation. The whole affair seems to have been the outcome of a most unfortunate misunderstanding, due principally to the inability of the naval and military commanders to grasp each the limits of the other's capabilities. 1814. Sept. 11.

There was, however, another reason for the indignation of the naval service against Prevost. In the rival squadrons the forces were about equal. In each there was a flagship of superior size, the British *Confiance* and the American *Saratoga*, three smaller vessels and eleven gun-boats. Downie's dispositions appear to have been able enough, but at the critical moment of entering into action the wind failed, with consequences which were disastrous. The *Confiance* was compelled to anchor before she had reached her appointed station; the American galleys, being propelled by oars, were enabled to concentrate their fire upon her; and the *Finch*, one of the smaller British vessels, was unable to reach her place in the line and drifted ashore upon Crab Island, a mile to southward. All this was sheer bad luck, the fortune of war. But the *Chub*, another small British vessel, on receiving some damage to her spars, was allowed by her commander to drift helplessly through the American line, where she hauled down her colours; and seven if not eight out of the eleven British gun-boats, following the example of the officer in charge of them, turned tail directly the firing began. Thus the

[1] I am aware that in holding this opinion I differ from so great an authority as the late Admiral Mahan; but his reasoning does not convince me.

1814. Sept. 11. *Confiance* and the *Linnet* were left to carry on the fight practically alone, which they did with signal gallantry until overpowered. "You owe it, sir, to the shameful conduct of your gun-boats and cutters that you are performing this office to me," said Macdonough to Lieutenant Robertson, Downie's successor, when the British officer surrendered his sword, "for had they done their duty, you must have perceived from the situation of the *Saratoga* that I could hold out no longer." The commander of the *Chub* was severely reprimanded by the court-martial which tried the officers and crews of the squadron in England, and the commander of the gun-boats absconded rather than face the consequences of his misconduct.

It is difficult to know whether to urge these circumstances in accusation or in defence of Prevost. On the one hand, it seems certain that the British squadron, properly manned and directed, could and would have beaten Macdonough's, and that it failed very much owing to the misconduct of both men and officers. On the other, it is impossible to believe that the gun-boats would have behaved so ill as they did, had not their crews consisted principally of Canadian militia, imperfectly disciplined for any purpose, and little stiffened by a small leaven of soldiers and marines. Downie made no complaint of them that I can discover; but an officer of any spirit will never raise difficulties, and he may well have trusted to the general superiority of the *Confiance* to make good all defects.

Prevost died before he could stand his trial and, in default of his appearance, judgment has been given against him. This is very unfair. The whole weight of civil as well as of military direction lay upon him, and throughout the three wearing years of his command he was called upon to make bricks without straw. At the outset he was bidden to do his best without hope of troops or of money; and, though he received more of both than could have been expected, he never received them at the appointed time, and thus was unable to lay

his plans with any certainty of being able to execute 1814.
them. Above all, he had no naval force, for but few officers and men could be spared from England; and yet this war was to all intent a naval war inland. Hence his instinct was to husband his resources, to stand constantly on the defensive, and to welcome every chance of an accommodation; and it cannot be said that such policy was altogether incorrect. It was unwise, indeed, to trust to any negotiation or agreement with the Americans, for, whatever the good faith of the individual officer who might treat with him, no confidence could be reposed in that of the President or of Congress. But the defensive attitude was the right one in principle, and was repeatedly approved by Wellington when his advice was sought. It is easy to blame Prevost, and indeed Wellington also, for not taking advantage of offensive successes; but it must be remembered that Sir George had only imperfect and irregular information of events in Europe, and that he had to treat his force as the only army that existed for the defence of Canada. On the whole it must be said, taking his civil and military administration together, that he fulfilled an extremely difficult duty with no small measure of success, amid endless worry and anxiety, and latterly, as it should seem, though he was not yet fifty years of age, under the burden of failing health. When all is said, the criticism levelled at Prevost rarely rises above the natural but superficial cavilling of local and personal prejudice, and never regards the situation in its entirety. Yet his is, above all, a case in which it must be remembered that, though subordinates may reap the credit for any local success, the responsibility for every failure everywhere recoils upon the Commander-in-Chief.

The ablest and soberest of the American historians has written that the battle of Lake Champlain, more than any other incident of the American War, deserves the epithet decisive. In a sense this is true, so far as concerns any efforts of the British Government to

1814. attempt an offensive movement on the Canadian frontier. In the first alarm after the defeat at Plattsburg, Liverpool offered the command in Canada to Wellington, in the hope that he might obtain peace upon honourable terms. Wellington put forward no objection, but said bluntly that he could promise himself little success. "That which appears to me to be wanting," he wrote, "is not a General or general officers or troops, but a naval superiority on the lakes. . . . This question is whether we shall acquire this naval superiority. If we can't, I shall do you but little good in America, and I shall go there only to prove the truth of Prevost's defence." "Does it not occur to you," he added a few days later, "that by appointing me to go to America at this moment, you give ground for belief all over Europe that your affairs there are in a much worse situation than they really are?"[1] Here the great Duke's strong common sense gave him insight into the heart of the matter. No object was to be gained by continuance of the war; and, in a contest of shipbuilding on the lakes, the natural advantages enjoyed by the Americans were so great that British superiority, though existent for the moment on Lake Ontario, was so precarious that its endurance could not be counted upon even from month to month. At best, therefore, England could obtain only a temporary and superficial success, which might or might not be useful for purposes of negotiation; whereas all essential profit had been gained already. "Considering everything," wrote Wellington in one of the letters above quoted, "it is my opinion that the war has been a successful one, and highly honourable to the British arms." This was no exaggeration, but the strict and simple truth. The Americans had won two great naval victories on the lakes; but here was nothing very extraordinary, seeing that the naval resources of England were already taxed to the utmost by operations against France and the

[1] *Supp. Desp.* vol. ix. pp. 425, 435. Wellington to Liverpool, 9th-18th Nov. 1814.

United States on the high seas; whereas America had at her command a large reserve of artificers and seamen from her maritime population. Even so, her chief naval commander, Chauncey, though by no means without talent and energy for organisation, had not shone in the field of active operations. Indeed it cost Perry and Macdonough, both excellent officers, no small effort to cope with the ill-manned and ill-equipped squadrons of Barclay and Downie. 1814.

On land also the Americans were not without their victories, most notably against the worst of the British commanders, Proctor; but, speaking broadly, the quality of their troops, the leadership of their generals, and the strategy of their Government were one and all beneath contempt. After three campaigns they had indeed succeeded in mastering Detroit; but they failed to take the petty station of Mackinaw, they could establish no footing on the frontier of Niagara, and they were actually unable to expel the British from Fort Niagara on their own side of the boundary. Considering the enormous resources of the United States and the powerlessness of England, locked as she was in a grapple with France for life or death, to send help to Canada, the war was, as said Wellington, successful and highly honourable to the British arms. The inevitable inference is that it was disgraceful to America; and so in fact it was; not because brave men were lacking in the United States—far from that—but because both Government and people conceived of war not as the highest of human trials, to be encountered only after much searching of heart and prolonged training in discipline and endurance, but as an easy and triumphant progress, to be varied by the recreation of wanton mischief and plunder. On the Canadian frontier the British could do little more than render nugatory the operations of the American forces; and this they successfully did, for it may truly be said that in that quarter the Americans in three campaigns accomplished absolutely nothing towards their avowed

1814. end, the conquest of Canada. It is now time to turn to the desultory operations in other districts, whereby the British sought to bring home to the Americans the fact that he who makes war must expect not only to give but to receive a buffet.

CHAPTER XX

THE first, though not the earliest in date, of the subsidiary offensive operations of the British was an expedition conducted by Sir John Sherbrooke, Lieutenant-governor of Nova Scotia, with the view of occupying so much of the State of Maine as should ensure uninterrupted communication between Halifax and Quebec. Sherbrooke sailed from Halifax on the 22nd of August with ten transports containing nearly two thousand men ;[1] and, escorted by a squadron under Admiral Griffith, made for the Penobscot river, which he entered on the 1st of September. Having taken the fort of Castine after a trifling resistance, Sherbrooke on the 3rd sent a detachment farther up the stream. These drove away after a slight skirmish a force of militia, which was endeavouring to protect an American frigate, and, after forcing the enemy to abandon and burn the frigate, followed up the militia and compelled them to disperse. On the 9th the expedition dropped down the river again to Machias, when the fort was evacuated upon the approach of the British ; and Sherbrooke, having annexed by proclamation all the country lying east of the Penobscot up to the boundary of New Brunswick, settled down to occupy it with the full consent of the inhabitants. Upon Wellington's representations, however, England renounced all claim to keep this territory upon the negotiations for peace. Wellington contended, truly enough, that Sherbrooke's garrison was so small that it could not claim possession ;

1814. Sept. 1. Sept. 9.

[1] Dets. of 29th, 7/60th, 62nd and 98th.

1814. but it was none the less a misfortune that the new boundary could not have been preserved, for it might have averted dangerous discontent and disputes in the future.

Far more effective in its results was the armament which descended in August upon the Chesapeake, the happy hunting-ground of the British fleet during the year 1813. The only defensive force kept by the American Government in this quarter was a flotilla of thirteen galleys and gun-boats under Commodore Barney, which, owing to their lighter draught, were able to escape up the rivers if seriously threatened. Barney was a brave and skilful officer, but his operations were cramped by the fact that the British had established and fortified an advanced base at Tangier Island opposite the mouth of the Potomac, from which their ships effectually hindered the passage of the flotilla between the five great rivers—the Patuxent, Potomac, Rappahannock, York and James, that run into the southern portion of Chesapeake Bay. At the confluence of the Potomac with its tributary, the Eastern Branch, stands the city of Washington, which, as the capital of the United States, the British Government had selected as the fittest recipient of a first salutary lesson. The Americans had wantonly wrecked and plundered York, the capital of Upper Canada; they were now to have an opportunity of defending their own chief city. On the 1st of June General Ross had sailed from Bordeaux with three battalions[1] and one company of artillery from Wellington's army, and arrived at Bermuda on the 24th. There he picked up the Twenty-first and a battalion of marines; and, proceeding on his voyage on the 3rd of August, entered the capes of the
Aug. 15. Chesapeake together with his convoy on the 15th. There were now assembled at the rendezvous four ships of the line, and several smaller vessels of war,

[1] 1/4th, 44th, 85th. The 44th had been sent home from Portugal early in 1813, and had rejoined after the battle of Toulouse.

from which the naval Commander-in-Chief, Sir Alexander Cochrane, furnished Ross with yet another battalion of seven hundred marines, raising his force to over four thousand men. 1814.

The first object of the expedition was the destruction of Barney's flotilla at the head of the Patuxent, from the banks of which river Washington also could be reached by a short march overland. The squadron of frigates was sent up the Potomac to keep the enemy in doubt as to the true route that would be taken by the army; and on the 18th the main body of the armament sailed up the windings of the Patuxent between banks covered with huge forest trees. Aug. 18. On the 19th the troops were landed at Benedict, on the western margin of the river twenty-five miles from its mouth, and were organised by Ross into three brigades, one consisting of light troops under Colonel Thornton, the other two being under Colonels Brooke and Paterson.[1] Aug. 19. The force then advanced northward, keeping in touch with the squadron on the river, to Upper Marlborough, three miles above Pit Point, where Barney's flotilla was lying. Perceiving escape to be impossible the American Commodore withdrew his crews on the 21st, leaving only a few men upon each boat to set fire to her; and on the 22nd, upon the approach of the British vessels, the entire flotilla was destroyed. Aug. 22.

From Upper Marlborough two roads led to Washington, the one bearing nearly due west to a bridge which carried it over the Eastern Branch immediately into the city, the other trending north-west to the bridge of Bladensburg, which lay about five miles farther up the river. About midway in the former of these roads was a crossway at a place called Oldfields, where roads forked out north-westward to Bladensburg, and south-west upon

[1] *1st Brigade.* Lt.-Col. Thornton (85th): 85th L.I., light cos. of 4th, 21st, and 44th; 1 co. marines; 1 co. negroes.
2nd Brigade. Lt.-Col. Brooke (4th): 4th, 44th.
3rd Brigade. Lt.-Col. Paterson (21st): 21st, 1 batt. marines.
Artillery: 1 six-pounder, 2 light three-pounders.

1814. Aug. 22. Fort Washington, which was the principal defence of the capital on the Potomac. There was thus considerable embarrassment for the American commander who was charged with the duty of repelling the invaders, for he could not divine which would be the objective preferred by his enemy nor, except in the case of Fort Washington, by what road he would decide to approach it.

The unfortunate individual selected for this trying duty was General Winder; and the force at his disposal amounted to between five to six thousand men, all of whom, with the exception of Barney's four hundred sailors, were militia. Winder had received his appointment on the 2nd day of July as military chief of a large district, which should have furnished him, according to the returns on paper, with ninety-three thousand militia. Had a force of even one-fourth of his strength been obtainable, however raw, it could have given Ross infinite trouble and perhaps have turned him back altogether; for the ground over which he had advanced was covered with forest, offering endless opportunities for the admirable marksmanship of the American riflemen, and presenting at every step strong positions for defence. So rotten, however, was the administrative system, and so slow were the people to answer the call of patriotic duty, that, out of fifteen thousand men summoned by the Government, not above three thousand had come forward by the 22nd of August. More were indeed on the way; but with such puny numbers Winder had no alternative but to fall back, finally taking up a position at Oldfields, as the point which he rightly judged to be most important. As he had expected, Ross advanced by the western road,

Aug. 23. and at nightfall of the 23rd the British encamped within three miles of Oldfields. Dreading the effect of a possible night attack, Winder retired in the darkness to Washington, burning the bridges over the Eastern

Aug. 24. Branch behind him; whereupon Ross on the 24th turned north-westwards, and at noon marched into Bladensburg.

Contrary to Winder's orders some militia stationed at this point had been withdrawn by their officers across the river, though without destruction of the bridge, and had been formed on some heights astride the road to Washington on the right bank, facing east. On the summit was posted a battery, which commanded the bridge, and on each flank of the guns was an array of infantry, with a second line in support. Since, however, the stream was fordable in many places above the bridge, this second line was weakened in order to extend the American left, which was further strengthened, when Winder came up, by the guns that he brought with him. The dispositions had not long been complete when the British Light Brigade topped the rising ground on the opposite side of the bridge; and though the Second and Third Brigades were still far in rear, the men being in bad condition after a long voyage, Thornton prepared to attack immediately. Ross assented; and at about one o'clock in the afternoon Thornton launched the Light Brigade at the bridge, and carried the passage, in spite of some loss from the American artillery. At this moment Barney came up with his seamen and guns, which were posted by Winder astride of the road to Washington and opposite the bridge. While the Commodore was making his dispositions, a few rockets thrown by the British towards the American left sufficed to throw the American militia in that quarter into panic, and the greater part of both lines turned and ran. A few only stood firm for a time, but broke immediately when Winder attempted to draw them back a little; and thus the American left was routed almost before it was engaged. 1814. Aug. 24.

Presently Thornton, having re-formed his brigade after passing the bridge, advanced up the road, apparently without throwing out a single skirmisher, and finding Barney's battery before him, halted for a few minutes. The Commodore coolly reserved his fire until Thornton was within close range, and then swept the British off the road with grape. A second and a third frontal attack

1814. were in like manner repulsed, and a fourth directed
Aug. 24. against Barney's right was met by a withering fire from three field-guns and from the musketry of the American seamen and marines. By this time Thornton himself, the two field-officers and nine other officers of the Eighty-fifth had fallen; and the Light Brigade was ordered to hold its own until Brooke's brigade could come up. In about half an hour, as it seems, Brooke appeared, his men much exhausted by a rapid march under a hot sun after long confinement on board ship. He was directed to turn the American right, while Ross galloped off to take personal command of the Light Brigade. By this time nearly the whole of the American force had disappeared from the field, with the exception of Barney's detachment and a body of five or six hundred infantry, which was very strongly posted upon his right. Brooke led the Forty-fourth against Barney's exposed left flank, and directed the Fourth to turn the infantry on the American right. These last after a feeble volley or two turned and ran before a charge of half their number of British; and Barney was left alone with his naval detachment, himself and two of his officers badly wounded, and two more of them killed. His men stood until some of them were bayoneted at their guns, when, finding that his ammunition-drivers had fled and that the whole party was in danger of capture, the Commodore ordered them to save themselves. Ten guns and a few prisoners fell into Ross's hands, among the latter being Barney himself, who was deservedly treated by his captors with all possible consideration and cordiality. He and his little band of disciplined seamen and marines had covered themselves with honour.

The action, trifling though it was, appears to have been ill-managed by Ross, who hurried his troops into action piece-meal, and thus ran great and unnecessary risk of seeing them defeated in detail. If it be urged that time was a great object, the obvious answer is that Ross was obliged, after all, to await the arrival of Brooke's brigade before he could drive the Americans from their

position. Thornton also appears to have handled his brigade without skill or science, delivering his frontal attacks in the most primitive and bludgeon-like fashion, with the inevitable consequence of temporary failure and appreciable loss. The casualties of the British numbered two hundred and forty-nine; and, strong though the Americans were in artillery, this was more than should have been needed to displace four hundred disciplined men encumbered by a rabble of five thousand. Harry Smith, who was present, did not hesitate to say that John Colborne would have accomplished as much as Ross at the sacrifice of no more than fifty men. However, the victory was complete, though the casualties of the vanquished hardly exceeded fifty; and Ross, after a short halt resuming his advance, entered Washington at eight o'clock on the same evening. In the morning Secretary Armstrong had ridden out to the American position with his colleagues, and had assured President Madison that, in a fight between regulars and militia, the militia must be beaten. None the less the President had prepared a supper of forty covers for his victorious officers; and this repast, to Madison's infinite mortification, was consumed by Ross and his staff. 1814. Aug. 24.

Then the work of punishment began, scrupulously judicial but severe. Private property was respected, and plunder was most strictly forbidden; but all public buildings, including the President's official residence and the Parliament House, as well as the navy-yard, store-houses, barracks and arsenal, were burned to the ground. Such destruction, even in the way of reprisal, is revolting to the civilised human mind, and though rigorously executed in obedience to orders from Downing Street, was by no means to the taste of many of Wellington's officers. The Americans of course shrieked loudly about vandalism, barbarism and so forth, and their cries were echoed by the ignoble faction which from beginning to end of the Great War sought to hamper the British Government and their

1814. Aug. country in the House of Commons. Nevertheless the punishment was righteous, and the Americans had only themselves to thank for it. York, the humble capital, but still the capital, of Upper Canada, had been treated by them in like fashion with far greater parade of wantonness and insolence; and both at York and in sundry villages private property had been destroyed and pillaged with the brutality peculiar to levies, which go eagerly afield to oppress the helpless, but fly to their own homes when they meet armed men. The burning of the public buildings at Washington was a salutary lesson to a nation whose conception of war was the bullying of a weaker neighbour.

The panic caused by this raid of four thousand enemies was complete. Five small British men-of-war, which had ascended the Potomac under command of Captain Gordon, while the main armament went up the Patuxent, arrived after infinite difficulty and exertion, owing to Aug. 27. shoal waters, on the 27th before Fort Washington. The fort itself, which mounted seventeen heavy guns besides smaller ordnance, was basely abandoned by its commander at the bursting of the first British shell. Thereupon the town of Alexandria, situated five miles below Washington, made overtures of capitulation; and Gordon, after holding the town for three days, retired, taking with him a number of trading vessels fully loaded with merchandise. Meanwhile Ross withdrew his troops from Washington on the night of the 25th; Aug. 29. and on the 29th returned safe and unmolested to Benedict. He owed the tranquillity of his retirement, it seems, to the report assiduously circulated by himself that he was going next to Baltimore and Annapolis, upon which the Americans shifted all their troops to that quarter.

The naval commanders, always eager for operations ashore and still untaught by the lessons of Curaçoa, Vera Cruz, Cadiz and Ferrol, now became urgent for an attack upon Baltimore, not without hope, as was natural in those days, of a great haul of shipping

and merchandise and consequently of prize-money. 1814.
Lieutenant De Lacy Evans, of Ross's staff, who later Aug.
rose to some degree of military fame, seconded Admirals Cochrane and Cockburn ; and only Harry Smith (if his own story is to be believed) uttered a note of warning. He represented that half of the men were on the sick list, owing to fatiguing marches after long confinement on board ship, that the enemy had been induced by Ross's own stratagem to concentrate force at Baltimore, and that the passage up the river to the city had been obstructed by sunken ships. Ross, before sending Smith home with despatches, promised to have nothing to do with the adventure ; and apparently he prevailed for a time with the Admirals, for Cochrane wrote on the 30th that the next enterprise attempted would be the reduction of Rhode Island with a view to quartering the army upon the enemy until November ; after which, if reinforced, it would proceed southward. On the 2nd of September this same project was still in favour, Sept.
and the more so since the Americans would judge Rhode Island to be the base for a grand attack upon New York. They were in fact already fortifying Brooklyn and Manhattan Island, according to Cochrane's information, and would thus be unable to spare reinforcements for the Canadian frontier—an erroneous calculation, for there was New York militia both with Brown in his sortie from Fort Erie on the 17th, and with Macomb at Plattsburg on the 11th of September. However, for some reason which does not appear, the project against Baltimore was revived, and Ross was induced to consent to it.[1]

The troops were accordingly re-embarked ; and the squadron, sailing up Chesapeake Bay, anchored at the mouth of the Patapsco river, which is the water-way to Baltimore Harbour, while the lighter vessels stood up the stream to the northern shore a little above North Point. Here on the morning of the 12th the soldiers Sept. 12.
were landed on the peninsula formed by the Back

[1] W.O. i. 141. Ross to Sec. of State, 30th Aug., 2nd Sept. 1814.

1814. Sept. 12. River on the north and the Patapsco on the south, at a point some thirteen miles from Baltimore. Advancing northward to turn the head of an inlet, they came upon the enemy completing his entrenchments across a neck of land less than half a mile broad from water to water. This position was abandoned instantly on the approach of the red-coated skirmishers; and the British moved on for another two miles, when, entering wooded country, they found themselves much harassed by concealed American riflemen. Ross, who was riding in advance to reconnoitre, was mortally wounded by one of these marksmen; but Brooke, taking command, pressed on to within five miles of Baltimore, when he was again stopped by some five thousand Americans with six guns, who were drawn up in dense formation across a second narrow neck of land, here more than a thousand yards wide. Brooke promptly sent out the Light Brigade in skirmishing order, deployed his own brigade along the whole length of the line, and held his third brigade in columns on the road, with orders to deploy to the left and press the American right as soon as the ground should become sufficiently open to permit the movement. The water on the American left was fordable, and for this reason General Stricker, who commanded their force, had placed one battalion *en potence* at the extremity of his line, so as to guard his left flank. All being ready, Brooke launched his troops to the attack; and the Fourth, which had worked its way unseen close to Stricker's left, suddenly revealed itself within twenty yards of the battalion mentioned above. The Americans fired one random volley and fled; the whole of the left wing fled likewise; and though the right wing stood for a little longer and seems to have offered some real resistance, all presently ran away in the haste and confusion of panic, leaving two guns behind them.

The day being far spent, and the troops much fatigued by such exertions on their first day ashore, Brooke halted for the night where he stood, and on the

following morning advanced to within a mile and a half of Baltimore. He found the ring of hills, which surrounded the city, strengthened by a chain of palisaded redoubts, which were connected by a small breastwork. These lines were defended, according to the information furnished to him, by some fifteen thousand militia with a considerable number of guns; wherefore, to neutralise the superiority of the enemy's artillery as far as possible, he resolved to delay his attack until the night. In the evening, however, he heard from Cochrane that the entrance to the harbour had been blocked by sunken ships, and that the Navy was consequently unable to co-operate in any further movement. This fact, as has been told, was known to the British commanders before they started on the expedition, but the Admirals had made light of it, averring that they would remove all obstacles without difficulty. Brooke, therefore, retired slowly on the 14th, and, finding himself unpursued, re-embarked his soldiers at North Point. The operations had cost the British two hundred and ninety killed and wounded, of which ninety-two belonged to the Twenty-first, and ninety-nine to the Forty-fourth —a useless and almost a wicked sacrifice of life, for no object except, it is to be feared, to bring prize-money to the Navy. Unfortunately this was not the first nor the last disaster attributable to the same cause.

1814. Sept. 13. Sept. 14.

With a force now reduced to little more than thirty-five hundred men, Brooke, in company with Admiral Malcolm, made a petty raid on the Virginian side of the Potomac on the 5th and 6th of October; and then sailed for Jamaica, where he arrived on the 1st of November. There he was joined on the 21st by five companies of the Rifle Brigade,[1] and by the Ninety-third Highlanders, which had recently returned, the one from France and the other from the Cape of Good Hope. Cochrane with his fleet having already arrived on the 19th, the armament was completed by the

Oct. 5-6. Nov. 21.

[1] 3rd Batt. They had arrived at Plymouth from the Peninsula on the 18th of July.

1814. Nov. coming of two West India regiments, and presently sailed for the mouth of the Mississippi. Its destination, as was too often the case throughout this war, had already been proclaimed in the West Indian newspapers, and possibly was no secret in any quarter by the autumn of 1814. In May, very soon after taking over the command of the North American and West Indian stations, Admiral Cochrane had despatched to the mouth of the Apalachicola river a frigate, whose captain, Pigot by name, after negotiation with the Creek and Choctaw Indians, had reported that, with the aid of a few British officers and sergeants, these savages could gain possession of Baton Rouge, from which base the conquest of New Orleans and the Lower Mississippi would be a simple matter. Accordingly Cochrane in August had sent an officer and a few non-commissioned officers, together with arms and ammunition, to the Indians, and seconded Pigot's recommendation to the Government in Downing Street. His views found all too ready acceptance with Ministers, who had already resolved to despatch a formidable force to New Orleans under Sir Rowland Hill.[1] As it happened, the political situation was not such as to permit the intended number of troops to be spared from Europe; and the expedition was therefore limited to six thousand men, of which one brigade, under Major-general Lambert, was to join the main body in the Mississippi itself. After the death of Ross, moreover, Sir Edward Pakenham, Wellington's brother-in-law, and lately his Adjutant-general, was appointed to the supreme command.

It is easy to see that the choice of New Orleans as an objective was due to naval advice, and that this advice was due chiefly to the desire for prize-money.

[1] Sir John Hope had been selected first to command this expedition; and Hill was substituted in consequence of Sir John's capture before Bayonne. Wellington, *Supp. Desp.* ix. 42. Sir G. Murray declined the offer of a divisional command in this force, *ibid.* 57, 58.

The city was the great depôt for the exportation of cotton and sugar; and it was estimated that the crops of these two commodities alone, stored up within it, were worth in England some three-and-a-half millions sterling, which tobacco, hemp, lead and shipping would increase to fully four millions. The seizure of so rich a hoard, if it could be easily and cheaply effected, might conceivably be the most telling blow that England could strike at the United States, a country upon which it is notoriously difficult to inflict vital injury. But this was not the reason why the naval officers recommended it. Prize-money had for nearly two centuries been the motive for all amphibious operations recommended by the Navy; and this of New Orleans was no exception. If any naval officers had shown stronger lust of prize than others, they were the Scots; and all three of the Admirals engaged in this expedition—excellent men in their own profession—were by a singular coincidence Scotsmen, Cochrane, Cockburn and Malcolm. Cochrane at the outset estimated that three thousand British soldiers would suffice to drive the Americans entirely out of Louisiana, as they would be joined by all the Indians, disaffected French and Spaniards; a piece of folly so childish that it ought to have warned the British Ministers against listening to any of his projects. Listen they did, however, though in their instructions to the commanders they stated the objects of the expedition to be, first, the seizure of the mouth of the Mississippi, so as to deprive the American back-settlements of communication with the sea, and, next, the occupation of some valuable possessions which would be useful to hold in pledge against the negotiations for peace. The General was also authorised to encourage any movement in favour of setting up an independent Government in Louisiana and of restoring it to Spain; but at the same time to make it clearly understood that the British Government could not make such independence or transfer of allegiance an essential condition in the negotiations for peace. This 1814.

1814. policy was dangerously near akin to that which had made shipwreck of the British cause in South America.

Dec. 2. On the 2nd of December General Jackson, who had lately commanded American troops in operations against the Creek Indians, arrived at New Orleans, where the militia of Kentucky and Tennessee had already received orders to join him by way of the river. He was a man who had gained some military experience in fighting against savages, a rancorous hater of the British, with whom he had combated as a boy in the war of the American Revolution, brave, shrewd, energetic and resolute. His determination, openly expressed from the beginning, to harass, torment and annoy the British invaders until they were expelled, shows that he rightly appreciated the problem set to him, and had thought out the best means for its

Dec. 8. solution. On the 8th Cochrane anchored off Ship Island in Mississippi Sound, and began without delay to make his preparations. It was hopeless to think of sailing past the forts on the Lower Mississippi, and he therefore decided to turn those works by approaching the river through one or other of the creeks that traverse the huge swampy delta to east of it. From Ship Island the direct way was across the shallow lagoon called Lake Borgne, at the head of which a creek, known as the Bayou Bienvenu, furnished a landing-place within five miles of the Mississippi.

Five American gun-boats and a few smaller craft defended this lagoon; and, having no vessels of sufficiently light draught to navigate its waters, Cochrane was obliged to attack them with forty-five rowing boats

Dec. 14. of his fleet. This he did successfully on the 14th of December, capturing after a very sharp fight every one of the American vessels. The way being thus laid open, the advanced guard[1] was put into the ships' boats

[1] Cavalry. 14th L.D., dismounted.
Advance. 4th, 85th, 95th.
1st Brigade. 21st, 44th, 5th W.I.R.
2nd Brigade. 93rd, 7th W.I.R.

and rowed to Isle aux Poix, a wretched swampy islet at 1814.
the mouth of the Pearl river, some twenty miles east
of the intended place of ultimate debarkation. Officers
were sent forward to reconnoitre the Bayou Bienvenu,
who found no sign of opposition to an advance by that
line; and by the 21st the whole of the land forces Dec. 21.
were assembled at Isle aux Poix. On the morning of the
22nd General Keane and Admiral Malcolm embarked Dec. 22.
with twenty-four hundred men on gun-vessels and
boats, and set sail for the mouth of the Bayou Bienvenu.
Within three miles the largest vessels ran aground, and,
as the voyage proceeded, the lagoon became dotted at
intervals with craft which were hard and fast on the
bottom; but none the less Keane and Malcolm pressed
on, and after dark reached their appointed destination.

A company of the Rifles, seeing a light not far ahead upon the north bank, landed, and, advancing stealthily, surprised and captured an American picquet without the firing of a shot. They then occupied the captured post—a small artificial mound enclosed within a screen of reeds ten to twelve feet high, all springing out of a vast swamp. The leading boats rowed up the creek, always through a forest of reeds, and the soldiers disembarking on the south bank found themselves within seven miles of New Orleans. One by one the rest of the flotilla came up; and early on the 23rd Dec. 23.
sixteen hundred men were ashore, and marching for the river. At the head of the creek the ground was firmer; the reeds disappeared; forests of cypress took their place, then sugar-canes, orange groves, cultivation and houses. After some trouble the situation of New Orleans was discovered, and the road to it; but the little party groped its way silently southward, hugging the banks of the creeks, which furnished the only stable ground for their feet, and so penetrating at about eleven o'clock to the house of a Mr. Villeré. Here a second picquet was surprised and captured, with however the unfortunate exception of an officer, who contrived to escape and give the alarm at New Orleans.

1814. Dec. 23. Thus far all had gone well; and the surprise of two picquets immediately after the destruction of the American flotilla did no great credit to Jackson's vigilance. But the strain upon the men of both services had been very heavy. The unfortunate blue-jackets had been in the boats for eight unbroken days and nights, tugging almost continuously at the oar; and some of the soldiers had been cooped up likewise for six days and nights. Furthermore, shortly after the flotilla left Isle aux Poix, the rain fell in torrents, and ceased only to give way to a cutting north wind, sleet and ice. The boats were so much crowded that the soldiers had no room to move, but were compelled to sit still, cramped and half-frozen, for twelve, eighteen and almost twenty-four hours together. Yet not a word of complaint was heard either from the overwrought sailors nor from their comrades of the army; though it must have occurred at any rate to the blue-jackets that an expedition of such a nature could not be of long continuance. The exertions and hardships of the previous thirty-six hours had served to bring up but one-third of the army. The boats had already returned to convey the two remaining brigades; but even then all supplies and stores would require to be transported in the same way—that is to say in row-boats—over a distance of seventy or eighty miles from Ship Island to the landing-place in the Bayou Bienvenu. Moreover, in case of defeat not only would re-embarkation of any kind be most difficult and hazardous, but it would be impossible to find sufficient small craft to carry the whole of the military force at once. There are times and circumstances in which such risks must and should be taken by commanders; but to put the country to the expense of sending six thousand men across the Atlantic for so mad a venture was little short of criminal.

The Spanish fishermen, who had guided Keane and Malcolm on their way, pressed them to advance at once. They urged with some measure of truth that

Jackson's peremptory measures had made him unpopular in New Orleans, that the defences which he had raised so far were trifling, that he had no troops worth speaking of to hold them, and that the bulk of the population of the city would side with the invaders. Moreover it was not much past noon, and five hours of daylight would suffice for the work in hand. Had Keane realised, as he ought, that he was engaged not upon a military operation but upon a mere buccaneering adventure, he would have acted upon this advice. The troops, set down as they were in the midst of chilly, unhealthy swamps after their long and miserable exposure in the boats, were sure to become sickly ; and delay would permit his enemies to improve their earthworks and to collect fresh levies. At best he might achieve a daring and striking success; at worst he would sacrifice no more than a small detachment, whose defeat would indeed mean the ruin of the expedition—in itself no misfortune—but could hardly be reckoned a great disgrace. However, treating affairs seriously as he did, he pointed to his men still out of condition after a long voyage, to his supports, supplies, and means of retreat, all of them eighty miles away, and declined, in spite of the remonstrances of Admiral Cochrane and Colonel Thornton, to take the risk. Had he advanced at once, he would probably have surprised Jackson before the American concentration had been accomplished. 1814. Dec. 23.

Jackson had been apprised on the morning of the 23rd of the arrival of a hostile flotilla at the head of Lake Borgne ; but it was not until two in the afternoon that he learned of the disembarkation of the British and fired the alarm-gun. The only field-works so far constructed appear to have been an unfinished battery for two guns thrown up on the road, along the left bank of the Mississippi, that led to New Orleans, and its function was to flank one of the many broad ditches that traversed the narrow isthmus, which, pent in between cypress-swamps on the north and the great river on the south, gave access to the city from the east. This line

1814. Dec. 23. was held by three hundred and fifty militia, who, upon the news of the British landing, had demanded to be led against the enemy, but had wisely been restrained by their commander, who was probably shrewd enough to know that raw levies, who clamour for action, invariably run away under fire and generally shoot their leaders. The numbers of the Americans were too small to guard effectually a front of a thousand yards ; and the ditch itself, though broad, could either have been crossed upon planks, of which there were plenty at hand, or could even in places have been forded. The obstacle therefore might have been carried with little difficulty ; and, if this had been done by one o'clock, New Orleans could have been reached by three or a little later. At that hour there were under Jackson's hand some nine hundred regular infantry, marines and artillery, with two guns, and perhaps three hundred volunteers. Seven to eight hundred more volunteers and militia were within call, but could not have arrived before four o'clock at the very earliest, probably not until half an hour later. There were a couple of small ships of war, the *Louisiana* and the *Carolina*, at anchor within sight of the British, but their commanders and men were engaged in throwing up batteries to the north of the city to fend off an attack from Lake Pontchartrain; and it is doubtful whether they could have been in position to rake the flank of the British advance until too late. Thus, if Keane had moved forward promptly, he would have found no regular scheme of resistance organised to meet him ; and, though he must have approached the city through a long straggling suburb, where riflemen might have wrought great havoc among his troops, he should with ordinary good fortune have succeeded in overcoming all opposition. Jackson, however, was a man who would have fought to the last, and was quite prepared to set fire to New Orleans if he could not hold it.

Having resolved to halt, Keane allowed his weary soldiers to lounge about at their ease. The weather had

become soft and mild, and men and officers wandered away to the neighbouring houses in search of food and wine, wherewith they comforted themselves, though to no excess, after a long fast and the hardships of the previous forty-eight hours. In the presence of so cunning an enemy, renowned for marksmanship and for skill in all the minor tricks of war, this seems imprudent; but, except for the advance of a few mounted riflemen, who were at once driven back by the foremost picquets, the Americans made no attempt to molest the British. Such was Keane's confidence that, though aware of the presence of the two men-of-war in the river, he raised no shelter to shield his bivouac from a cannonade from the river, nor did he attempt to fortify his position against any attack either from the water or from the land. Night fell; the bivouac was ablaze with fires; and the men were asleep or cooking. Then suddenly round-shot came pouring among them from the side of the river, and a continuous roar, with the sight of distant flashes, proclaimed that one of the American ships had dropped down the river to a point over against Keane's head-quarters, and was pouring in her broadsides as fast as they could be fired. The panic and confusion became indescribable. The ground most heavily scored by the American shot was the alarm post around Keane's quarters, and thus the centre of command and the appointed rallying-place became the place of greatest danger. The foremost picquet of riflemen on the New Orleans road, under Captain Hallèn, stuck to their post totally unmoved by the firing; the second picquet of the Eighty-fifth, which was ensconced in a house and a garden somewhat to Hallen's right rear, succumbed to the panic and ran back to the bivouac. After vainly trying to array themselves in some kind of formation, officers and men finally took refuge under shelter of the raised bank of the river, or of any other cover that they could find, and there sorted themselves into a semblance of order. 1814. Dec. 23.

The confusion was at its height when a dropping fire

1814. of musketry began opposite to Hallen's picquet. Jack-
Dec. 23. son by five o'clock in the evening had collected some two thousand men, of which he had directed about fifteen hundred—including the whole of his regular troops—with two guns to assail the British front near the river, under his personal command; while five to six hundred more under General Coffee should fetch a compass, following the border of the cypress swamp, and fall upon Keane's right flank. The fire of the *Carolina's* guns was to be the signal for the attack, and, so far as Jackson's own force was concerned, the sloop opened at the right moment; but Coffee's column was still far from its appointed station when the American advanced guard first exchanged shots with Hallen's eighty riflemen. Few though they were and unsupported, this little band of green-jackets held their post with desperate tenacity and would not give way. Strive as they might, the Americans could not force their way past them by the main road, for which reason, swerving to their left, they made their way across country athwart the British right, and occupied the house that had been evacuated by the picquet of the Eighty-fifth. Thence penetrating eastward they came upon more companies of the Rifles and of the Eighty-fifth, and engaged with these in a blind and confused struggle. As both sides spoke the same language, not even voices could distinguish friends from foes in the darkness. British fired on British, and Americans upon Americans. Both sides made prisoners of their own men, discovered their mistake, and turned to seek their real foes. Where they met there were savage encounters with the bayonet and the butt, without order, without method, and with no clear object. Once the Americans obtained for a moment possession of the road in rear of Hallen, and captured a reinforcement of thirty men who were on their way to him, but even so they could not drive him from his post. Gradually, as Coffee's column came into action, the enemy spread down the whole

length of the British right flank, and the British position was enclosed in a triangle of fire, Hallen marking the apex, the *Carolina* the riverward side, and a stream of musketry the landward side. In one spot the riflemen of the two nations stood almost muzzle to muzzle on each side of a light paling ; in another the two light three-pounders, which were Keane's only artillery, stood silent, the officer in charge of them not daring to fire and hardly knowing which was his front and which his rear ; in a third the British were pressing hard upon the two American cannon, and only with difficulty were driven back. Gradually superior discipline and experience told. Some companies of the Twenty-first and Ninety-third, which had first landed, stayed the progress of the enemy round the British right flank, and the Americans began to give way. The Eighty-fifth recovered the house and garden abandoned by their picquet; and the Americans, losing heart as they lost ground, appear finally to have streamed back to New Orleans as a disorderly rabble. The fight had lasted for the best part of three hours ; and at midnight all firing ceased. 1814. Dec. 23.

The British loss in this affair amounted to two hundred and thirteen killed and wounded, and sixty-four prisoners. The brunt of the work had fallen upon the Eighty-fifth and Ninety-fifth, each of which counted over eighty officers and men slain or hurt, their joint casualties amounting to two hundred and twenty-eight killed, wounded and missing. The Americans lost two hundred and thirteen of all ranks, of whom seventy-four were prisoners. Upon striking the balance of advantage from these figures, therefore, the Americans may be said to have come off the better; and Jackson certainly deserved success from the promptness and vigour of his attack. It is perhaps hardly too much to say that, if he had not encountered Hallen's handful of veterans from the Light Division upon the main road, he would have gone near to destroy one half, if not the whole, of Keane's detachment. Too

1814. much credit cannot be given to this little party of the
Dec. 23. Ninety-fifth; and it is distressing to hear that Hallen, who was severely wounded on this occasion, was still a captain in 1824, when he retired from the army. By his good service principally the impetus of Jackson's onslaught was broken; and, in spite of that General's utmost personal exertions, the American troops were so much shaken by their repulse that, if the narratives of British officers are to be trusted, they could have offered little resistance to an immediate advance.

According to American accounts Jackson intended in concert with Coffee to renew the attack at one o'clock
Dec. 24. in the morning of the 24th, having been reinforced by a party of militia, but countermanded his orders upon learning that part of Brooke's brigade had arrived, and that the rest of it was following. Be that as it may—and Jackson's character was not such as to belie the story—the American General at four o'clock ordered a general retreat, and withdrew to the line of the canal, which was flanked by the two-gun battery already mentioned, three miles from the British bivouac and four miles below New Orleans. Keane for his part remained supine. Whether or not a bold advance would have carried him straight into the city, it is difficult to say, but certain it is that he made no such attempt. At dawn of the 24th the *Carolina* was still firing upon the British lines, and she continued to do so at intervals for the rest of the day. Had Keane moved up to his right to outflank the American works, so as at least to secure the two-gun battery, which was open in rear, and to force Jackson to take up a position closer to the city, he might at any rate have withdrawn his troops during daylight beyond range of the *Carolina's* guns, and possibly have turned the captured American pieces upon her. But whether he was unnerved, or dared not take the responsibility upon himself when his Commander-in-Chief was hourly expected, he sat perfectly still.

Dec. 25. On the 25th Jackson began to fortify his position

in earnest, prolonging the broad ditch which already traversed the plain across the road to the Mississippi, a little in rear of the battery, and erecting a barricade of sugar-casks behind the ditch itself from the river to the cypress-swamp, to serve for a breastwork. The guns in the battery were also augmented to four heavy pieces which, raking the ditch from end to end, greatly increased its efficacy as an obstacle. Keane, no more than a mile and a half away, allowed the Americans to pursue this work without the slightest molestation, although by this time the whole strength of the force, excepting Lambert's brigade, had disembarked. Sir Edward Pakenham likewise arrived, full of apprehensions, for he distrusted Cochrane and had been most anxious to take up his command before operations should have been begun. 1814. Dec. 25.

When he realised the situation into which the Admiral had decoyed the army, he was with good reason furious. To all intent his force was cooped up on an isthmus three-quarters of a mile broad between the Mississippi and the swamp. In front was Jackson's fortified position ; on the river were the enemy's armed vessels, flanking the only possible line of advance ; and in rear were the lake and the sea. The only base of supply was some eighty miles distant, and accessible only in open boats ; and the last four miles of this water-way were so narrow that it would hardly admit two boats abreast. When water-carriage ceased, the track from the landing-place to the camp—a distance of about four miles—was so bad after rains or high tides that provisions and stores could only be brought forward upon men's backs. Moreover, victuals, with the exception of a few cattle, were unobtainable upon the spot, and the total quantity of supplies in the fleet did not exceed one month's store, which, taking the return voyage into account, was none too great. Again the line of communication was insecure ; for five miles north of New Orleans was Lake Pontchartrain, from which there was an outlet into Lake Borgne. The

1814. squadron could not provide guard-boats to watch this
Dec. 25. and other channels, so that it was perfectly open to the Americans to send a force against the landing-place, destroy the depôts there, and intercept all incoming barges. Lastly, Lambert's brigade had not yet appeared; and the force on the spot was reduced to fewer than five thousand effective of all ranks. Of these the Fourth and Ninety-third were strong and excellent; the Twenty-first strong but undisciplined; the Forty-fourth, only just recruited after heavy losses in the Peninsula, was indifferent; and the Eighty-fifth and Rifles counted little more than five hundred men between them. The negroes of the West India Regiments, having been sent away without blankets or warm clothing, were so much numbed with cold that they were absolutely useless even for fatigue-duties. For all practical purposes the effective force numbered little, if at all, more than thirty-five hundred of all ranks.

In the depth of his disgust Pakenham used strong language, which was pardonable; but he used it without concealment, so that his opinions filtered down to the privates, which was inexcusable unless he had determined to abandon the enterprise altogether. This, however, it seems that he had not; possibly because he considered persistence in the undertaking, until he had at least dealt the Americans a severe blow, to be the only safe way of extricating his force. Trustworthy information respecting the enemy's actions was unobtainable, and Jackson's strength was stated by prisoners at any figure from seven to fourteen thousand men. The only method of obtaining intelligence, therefore, was a reconnaissance in force; but, before this could be undertaken, it was necessary to destroy or drive from their stations the two American war-ships on the Mississippi, of which the *Carolina*, by shifting from one bank to the other according to the British changes of position, was a source of constant annoyance though
Dec. 26. not of serious injury. Accordingly on the 26th, the day after his arrival, Pakenham caused batteries to be

erected on the bank with furnaces for heating shot. 1814.
The *Carolina* endeavoured to move up the river, but, being foiled by a head wind, was kindled and burned on the 27th. The *Louisiana* was able to shift her Dec. 27.
position, though by general admission she also might and should have been destroyed ;[1] and she then took up an anchorage under the western bank, abreast of Jackson's entrenchment, so as to sweep the approach to it with a flanking fire. At dawn of the 28th Dec. 28.
Pakenham, having reorganised his force into two brigades,[2] advanced with both of them towards the American line, and, on arriving within cannon-shot, was greeted with a heavy fire from the battery and from the frigate on the river. Colonel Burgoyne, who accompanied the General, agreed with him that a simple frontal attack was out of the question ; and the troops, after suffering a loss of forty or fifty killed or wounded, were withdrawn to a new encampment not more than two miles from the American lines. Detached redoubts were thrown up in advance for the protection of the line pending further operations.

Pakenham now decided that the only possible chance of success was to breach Jackson's breastwork with heavy cannon, and, having done so, to assault. The following days were therefore spent in bringing up ten eighteen-pounder guns and four twenty-four pounder carronades from the ships, a very arduous task, which taxed to the utmost the strength and endurance of the long-suffering seamen. The American general, of course, was not idle during this interval, continuing to strengthen his foremost entrenchments, to mount additional pieces in them, and to prepare two more lines of defence in rear ; while Commodore Patterson of the *Louisiana*, landing both men and guns on the right bank of the Mississippi, threw shot unceasingly into the

[1] Harry Smith, *Autobiography*, i. 231 ; James, ii. 363.

[2] *1st Brigade.* Major-general Gibbs : 4th, 21st, 44th, 5th W.I.R.

2nd Brigade. Major-general Keane : 85th, 93rd, 95th Rifles, 1st W.I.R.

1814. British camp. This cannonade, added to constant petty attacks upon the British outposts, to which Jackson wisely never gave five minutes' rest, caused not a few casualties, and contributed materially to wear down the strength and endurance of the invaders. On the
Dec. 31. evening of the 31st four eighteen-pounders were placed by the British in battery by the river to keep the *Louisiana* at a distance; and six more, together with four carronades and a battery of field-guns, were mounted as best they could be under the shelter of casks of sugar,
1815. within five hundred yards of the enemy's line. The
Jan. 1. morning of the 1st of January 1815 broke with a dense fog, which did not clear until eight o'clock, when the British guns opened fire. The Americans promptly replied, and it was very soon evident that the British pieces were overmatched. The British projectiles were effectually stopped by the bales of cotton of which the American breastwork was built; whereas the American shot quickly demolished the slender protection thrown up round the British batteries. After a duel of an hour several of the British cannon had been dismounted from their naval carriages, and Pakenham was fain to abandon them and send a party to draw them off under cover of night—a work of great difficulty owing to a heavy fall of rain. The result of the action was a great disappointment to him, as he had issued detailed orders for a general assault, in the expectation that the American artillery would have been speedily silenced.

The absolute failure of this cannonade convinced the British general that the American lines could be forced only by enfilading them from the right bank of
Jan. 2-3. the river. On the 2nd and 3rd Commodore Patterson landed more guns from the *Louisiana* on that side, and kept up a more destructive cannonade than ever; and Sir Alexander Cochrane now proposed a very ingenious plan for passing troops over to the right bank, seizing this battery of Patterson's and turning the guns upon Jackson's main line. The Admiral's idea was to widen and deepen the canal, known as Villeré's canal, along

which ran the road constructed by the British for purposes of communication, to carry it through the dyke of the Mississippi into the stream, and so to make a direct water-way from the British advanced base to the great river itself. The suggestion was adopted, and the work, being begun at once,[1] was pressed forward with such energy that by the evening of the 6th the naval officers were able to report that everything had been completed to their satisfaction. On that day also arrived Lambert's brigade of the Seventh and Forty-third, some seventeen hundred strong; and Pakenham matured his schemes for an attack at daylight of the 8th. In the course of the 7th some fifty boats of all sizes were brought into the newly cut canal, and dragged to within a short distance of the Mississippi. The Admiral reported that this had been done without the knowledge of the enemy; but the whole movement was perceived by Commodore Patterson from the right bank of the river, and was duly reported by him to Jackson. The American general, however, appears to have taken no notice of this warning, perhaps because he relied upon an unfinished redoubt, which covered Patterson's battery about half a mile further down stream, to ward off any British attack on that side. This entrenchment was garrisoned by General Morgan with about one thousand militia and two guns; and Jackson contented himself with sending Morgan a few hundred more militia. The event was to prove that this neglect might have cost him very dear.

1815. Jan. Jan. 6. Jan. 7.

At nightfall of the 7th, Colonel Thornton with the Eighty-fifth and a naval brigade of seamen and marines, the latter counting some four hundred men, marched down to the Mississippi to embark on the boats that had been brought down the new water-way by the navy. The time fixed for crossing the river was nine o'clock, and the troops arrived punctually at their appointed

Jan. 7.

[1] Wylly in his report (*Pakenham Letters*, p. 257) says that the canal was not begun until the 6th, after the arrival of Lambert's brigade, but this is incredible.

1815. station, but found no boats. Hour after hour passed away, and still the boats came not; nor was it until
Jan. 8. past one in the morning of the 8th that a few of them at last began one by one to make their appearance. Either the naval officers or the engineers had been deceived in their calculations as to the widening of the canal. The banks, being of soft soil, had given way and blocked the channel about a quarter of a mile from the outlet to the Mississippi, the heaviest of the boats had grounded in this spot, and the whole of the flotilla behind it had been blocked. Pakenham, it is said, had predicted some such misfortune; but whether he had done so or not, the misfortune had come.[1] Only with great difficulty and labour were a few boats brought forward, and it was impossible for the rest to follow except after long delay. Thornton was placed in a most difficult position, for the whole success of the operations turned upon him. It had been expected of him to land on the right bank before midnight, storm Morgan's redoubt and Patterson's battery, and train the captured guns upon the flank of the American lines before dawn, so as to be ready to open fire at the signal of a rocket from Pakenham. Now he was already from seven to eight hours late, and only one-third of the appointed number of boats had reached him. Without delay he took his resolution, sent back the whole of his detachment except the Eighty-fifth and a hundred seamen and marines, and with fewer than four hundred men in all shoved off into the stream. He accepted a great risk, and deserves the highest praise for his enterprise.

On the left bank preparations went on throughout

[1] Harry Smith, i. 234-235. According to this account the canal was on a lower level than the river, and a dam had been constructed to hold the water in the canal when the dyke of the river should be cut through. The dam, as Pakenham had predicted, was too weak to bear the weight of water, and gave way, so that the water ran back and left the boats stranded until the dam could be repaired. Wylly (*Pakenham Letters*) says that the whole of the work on the canal was done under the eyes of the naval officers and approved by them.

the night of the 7th. Under cover of darkness parties were sent forward to patch up the batteries that had been raised on the 1st, opposite the American right and left; but, as water appeared within a foot of the surface, the men were obliged to pare the soil for a great distance all round in order to obtain earth. Thus the work was but slowly and imperfectly done, and the epaulments were still not shot-proof when six eighteen-pounder guns were, with great exertion, placed within them not long before dawn. Pakenham's plans were as follows. Over three hundred of the Rifles and as many of the Forty-fourth were pushed forward very early to occupy these works, and it was ordered that of these six hundred and fifty men four hundred—including three hundred of the Forty-fourth—were to fire, and the remainder to carry fascines. The officer in command of the Forty-fourth was further instructed to bring with him sixteen ladders and the fascines aforesaid, and to ascertain in good time where these requisites could be obtained so as to bear them forward with him. Under cover of the firing party and of the carriers of fascines and ladders, the main attack was to be delivered by the Twenty-first and the Fourth under General Gibbs, against the American left, the light companies of the brigade being thrown out to Gibbs's right along the edge of the swamp, so as to protect his right flank.

1815. Jan. 7-8. Jan. 8.

On the British left the second column, which was entrusted to Keane, was subdivided into two, whose movements were to be guided by the effect of the British artillery upon the American right. On the extreme left the light companies of the Seventh, Forty-third and Ninety-third, together with a hundred men of the First West India Regiment, were to advance along the road under command of Colonel Renny; while the bulk of Keane's brigade—which was reduced to the Ninety-third and the First West India—was to move on the right of Renny and parallel with him, and attack the American right centre, or strike in to the left of Gibbs, according to circumstances. Both columns were

1815. Jan. 8. to be covered by such Riflemen—a few score only—as remained over from Gibbs's brigade. The main bodies of the Seventh and Forty-third under Lambert were held in reserve.[1] The total number of white troops of all descriptions in line upon both sides of the river was about six thousand rank and file, with six heavy cannon and one battery of field-guns. In addition to these there were about a thousand negro soldiers. The Americans could oppose to this force some six thousand rank and file, with one thirty-two pounder, four twenty-four pounders, one eighteen-pounder and eight smaller guns on the left bank, besides nine heavy guns in Patterson's battery, and two field-pieces in Morgan's redoubt, making in all twenty-five cannon mostly of large calibre.

The whole of the troops fell in at four o'clock and moved up to their appointed stations well before daylight, the foremost skirmishers within one hundred and fifty yards of the American lines, and the Reserve not more than seven hundred yards distant from it. But there had been one grave oversight, for Lieutenant-colonel Mullens of the Forty-fourth had led his battalion to its place without bringing with him the ladders and fascines, as had been ordained. He had, it seems, halted for ten minutes by the redoubt where he had been told to collect them, but, finding no engineer there to give him any information, had marched on under the guidance of a serjeant of artillery to the post assigned to him in the right-hand battery. It was said that this officer had become infected with a spirit like to that which had called down Wellington's wrath upon the Fifth Division at

[1] The accounts of Pakenham's dispositions in Lambert's despatch, and in the narratives of Cooke, Gleig and Surtees, are all different and all wrong. Happily a copy of Pakenham's orders was sent by Keane to Wellington, and is printed together with Keane's journal in *Supp. Desp.* x. 394-400. That Riflemen did cover Keane's left is shown by Surtees (p. 371), who is not likely to have misstated the movements of his own regiment, and his story is partly confirmed by Cooke, p. 225.

San Sebastian, and had been complaining that his regiment was ordered upon a hopeless venture and was foredoomed to sacrifice. But this does not necessarily imply deliberate neglect on the part of Mullens ; rather it points to a negligence on the part of the staff which was to become only too conspicuous in the course of the day. The mistake was early discovered by General Gibbs, who gave orders for it to be rectified, and reported the circumstance to Pakenham. It was then not yet five o'clock ; and Sir Edward at once despatched one of his staff to ascertain the true state of affairs. The staff-officer galloped off on his errand, and shortly before dawn found the Forty-fourth straggling off to the front from the redoubt where Mullens had halted earlier in the morning, carrying the fascines and ladders in a very irregular and disorderly fashion. This in the circumstances was not surprising. The battalion, unlike its brother battalion of Wellington's army, was ill-disciplined, and the men had been hurried back at the double over five or six hundred yards of very deep ground, in order to repair an omission which was no fault of their own, with every prospect of being hustled again at the same rate to the front, lest they should be too late for the attack. They were breathless and ill-tempered, the ladders were heavy, and the fascines—made of ripe sugar-cane—very weighty indeed. Moreover, though by right only a small number of them should have been fascine-bearers and three-fourths of them should have been in the firing line, there was every likelihood that the whole of them would be employed in the work which had originally been designed for the Rifles. The staff-officer, however, reported to Pakenham that the battalion would regain its place in good time, and the General rode off, apparently satisfied. 1815. Jan. 8.

Shortly afterwards he sent for Harry Smith (if that officer's narrative is to be believed), and told him with much agitation of the mishap to Thornton's column, adding that no Commander-in-Chief had ever had such

1815. Jan. 8. difficulties to contend with as himself. It was still not quite daylight, and, the ground being covered with thick mist, Smith answered that there was still time to withdraw the troops before they could be seen by the enemy. "That may be," answered Pakenham, "but I have twice deferred the attack." Smith continued to argue on the other side, but the General would not listen and gave the order for the signal-rocket to be fired. Even then Smith endeavoured to counsel delay, but Sir Edward was peremptory. The rocket soared into the air, and Gibbs's brigade moved forward in column of companies to the assault, the Twenty-first leading, the Fourth in support, and the Forty-fourth with the ladders and fascines dispersed all round, breathless and unable to keep up. The American artillery received the assailants with a terrific cross-fire from both sides of the river, and as the storming party, checked at frequent intervals by the drains that ran across the plain, slowly drew nearer, the American musketry wrought havoc in their ranks. So severely were they punished that when within a hundred yards of the enemy's line, they hesitated, and, heedless of the Riflemen, who were skirmishing on their front, began to fire. The Riflemen threw themselves down to escape being shot in the back; and a few of the foremost of the Twenty-first reached the canal that covered the American breastwork, and hunted in vain up and down the bank for a plank or a ladder to enable them to cross it. One small band of brave men—some say, indeed, two whole companies—under Lieutenant Leavock of the Twenty-first actually traversed the canal, and scrambled up the entrenchment, where Leavock saw nothing before him but two American officers. He summoned them to surrender, but finding himself alone and unsupported was obliged to deliver up his own sword. The main body of the column meanwhile were firing into each other, and rapidly giving way to panic. Gibbs raged among them with oaths and reproaches, but could not stop

them. Pakenham galloped up with his staff to receive Gibbs's despairing report that the troops would not follow him, and directly afterwards Gibbs was struck down by a mortal wound. Pakenham rode among the flying soldiers, vainly striving to rally them. A bullet shattered his knee, and a second bullet killed his horse under him; but he was none the less in the act of mounting a second charger, when he was struck by a third bullet in the spine and in a few minutes expired. Gibbs's brigade then dissolved into a disorderly mass of fugitives, and streamed away to the shelter of the wood on the British right, in rout and demoralisation. 1815. Jan. 8.

On the British left the three light companies under Renny rushed through a terrific fire upon the advanced redoubt on the right of the American line; and, though two men out of every three fell before they reached the breastwork, the survivors drove out the defenders, captured four guns and ensconced themselves in the exterior ditch (the rear of the redoubt being open) until support should come to them. The Ninety-third should have been at hand, but Keane also had been wounded; and the Highlanders, owing to some strange order brought to them during the advance, had been shifted away to the right of Gibbs, where they were halted in close column within musket-shot of the enemy, and under the full blast of their fire. There they stood heroically until some five hundred of them had been killed or wounded, when very pardonably they fell back. Renny's companies, finding themselves isolated and alone, retired from the captured redoubt as best they could, leaving their gallant commander dead behind them; and the entire attack upon the left bank of the river was defeated with disastrous loss, at a cost to the Americans of no more than eight killed and fourteen wounded.

On the right bank Thornton and his little band fared better. As they stepped ashore, they saw the signal-rocket, and pushing on with all haste came after half an hour's march upon an advanced party of

1815. Americans. A boat with one carronade in her bow
Jan. 8. gave these a single round of grape from the river, which sufficed to set them running without further resistance. Continuing his progress, Thornton presently came upon General Morgan's redoubt, and, extending the Eighty-fifth along the whole length of it as skirmishers, launched his seamen in column against the rampart. A heavy discharge of grape from two field-pieces in front and from a battery in flank staggered the blue-jackets for a moment; but, Thornton waving them forward, they rushed on together with the Eighty-fifth through the smoke of the American cannon. The bare sight of them struck the Kentuckians and the rest of the defenders with terror, and they fled from their formidable stronghold without attempting to fight. Commodore Patterson, finding his battery exposed and defence impossible, spiked his guns and retired; and Thornton saw his task accomplished at no greater sacrifice than that of eighty-three killed and wounded, more than half of whom belonged to the Eighty-fifth. Being himself among the hurt, Thornton resigned the command to Lieutenant-colonel Gubbins of the Eighty-fifth, who pursued the flying enemy for two miles, when the news of the failure of the main attack caused him to halt. But the tidings of his success had been sufficient to throw Jackson into great perturbation, for the capture of his entrenchments on the right bank of the Mississippi had given the British (to use his own words) a position from whence they might annoy him without hazard, and even neutralise the repulse of their comrades on the left bank. He was about to set every man that he could spare in motion to regain the lost redoubt, when his anxiety was relieved in a very different fashion.

After the fall of Pakenham, Gibbs, and Keane the chief command devolved upon Lambert, who had landed only two days before, and knew little of Pakenham's plans or expectations except that, according to Sir Edward's calculation, the forcing of the first

line of entrenchments would not be the most formidable work of the day. He had still under his hand two superb and well-tried battalions of the Seventh and Forty-third; but Gibbs's brigade, though it rallied at last far in rear, was irrecoverably demoralised. Lambert brought forward his reserve to cover the retirement of the rest of his troops, and keeping them in that position held a kind of council of war. 1815. Jan. 8.

The casualties of the army on the left bank alone amounted to close upon two thousand killed, wounded and missing,[1] the last named being for the most part men who had been drowned or had been taken within the American entrenchments. Thus a full third of the force was killed or disabled, and at least another third unfit for further fighting. Three officers only, though the report of Thornton's success was before them, appear to have been in favour of renewing the attack; but only one of these, Colonel John Burgoyne, was entitled to be heard with real respect. Captain Codrington of the Navy, who was in charge of the victualling department, declared that another attack was imperative, otherwise the whole force would be starved. "Kill plenty more, Admiral," said Harry Smith; "fewer rations will be required." Ultimately, looking to the danger lest Thornton's detachment should be cut off, and a counter-attack delivered upon the main body, Lambert decided to send in a flag of truce, asking for a suspension of hostilities to bury the dead and collect the wounded, and despatched Colonel Alexander Dickson to the right bank to report upon the situation of Thornton's detachment. The Americans fired upon the flag of truce both with cannon and musketry, but eventually received it; and Jackson eagerly seized the opportunity to grant an armistice until noon of the 9th upon the left bank only, on condition that no reinforcements should be sent to the right bank by either party during the 8th. Lambert asked for twenty-four hours to consider this proposal,

[1] 295 killed, 1186 wounded, 483 missing = 1964.

1815. and, receiving Dickson's report that Gubbins could not
Jan. 8. hold his position in security with fewer than two thousand men, ordered Thornton's detachment to recross the river and rejoin the main body. This was safely effected under cover of a fog ; and, after remaining on the ground long enough to destroy his heavy guns, Lambert withdrew his troops through the darkness to their position of the morning, while Jackson eagerly reoccupied his lost entrenchments on the right bank.

Lambert's measures were of course preliminary to a retreat and a re-embarkation ; but a retreat was no easy matter. During the advance the soldiers had been brought up the creek in small parties upon the boats of the fleet. These boats were not numerous enough to take more than half of the men at a time ; wherefore there was a risk that the moiety embarked might be intercepted, and the moiety left behind might be stranded and overwhelmed. How naval officers could ever have planned a campaign upon such a basis is incomprehensible, yet it is certain that they did so. It was consequently necessary for Lambert to make a road through a quaking morass in order to march the whole of his men to the shores of Lake Borgne. This arduous work occupied nine entire days, during which Jackson with excellent judgment refrained from any further aggression than an incessant cannonade by day and night, and the despatch of emissaries to tempt the British soldiers to desert. Both methods met with considerable success. The bivouac, already rendered miserable enough by rain all day and frost all night, was made a purgatory by the incessant storm of shot. The men, who were not so much depressed as indignant at their defeat, became sulky and discontented ; the Forty-fourth was shunned by all other corps of the army ; and, with this quarrelsome and grumbling spirit abroad, many listened to the tempting offers of the Americans and deserted.

At last the road, such as it was, was completed—

a mere track covered with faggots of reeds, and bridged by rough branches brought from a distance. At night-fall of the 18th the battalions moved off in dead silence, leaving parties to keep the bivouac-fires alight, and after a short march on the high road entered the track through the swamp. The faggots soon turned to powder under the trampling of many feet, and the weary column struggled on for hours through the star-light, knee-deep in mud at the best of times, and hardly able to get forward at all when a creek was to be passed. More than one man was swallowed up quick in the mire before his comrades' eyes. However, in the morning the whole arrived, without any molestation from the enemy, at the wretched oasis in the desert of reeds which went by the name of the Fishermen's Huts. Here officers and men threw themselves down upon land rather less unsound than that which they had traversed, and in their drenched and muddy clothes fell asleep from sheer exhaustion.

1815. Jan. 18.

The boats were at hand to begin the embarkation; but through some miracle of imbecility, which must presumably be ascribed to Captain Codrington, no food had been brought with them except for the crews. The black corps and Forty-fourth were embarked, but, as the small craft were from seventy to eighty miles distant from the ships, there was always the chance that foul weather might condemn the force left on shore to starvation. Happily no such trial was in store for the troops. For two days those that remained on the strand of the lake lived on crumbs of biscuit and a minute allowance of rum; but then the boats reappeared, and all anxiety was at an end. Entrenchments were thrown up, although the enemy never showed themselves; and the only additional hardship was the lack of fuel, there being none except reeds, which flared up for a moment and then expired, providing neither warmth nor comfort. Gradually the whole of the soldiers were withdrawn without accident, and by the end of the month all of them were once more

1815. aboard the ships, where they found the Fortieth Foot had arrived as a reinforcement.

Bad weather delayed the departure of the fleet until
Feb. 5. the 5th of February, when Lambert and Cochrane agreed to sail to Mobile, which lies at the head of a bay whose mouth is about fifty miles east of the anchorage at Cat Island. The defences of the place consisted of a small fort, called Fort Bowyer, on the eastern horn of the headland that forms the bay, and of a battery upon the Isle of Dauphiné, which lies
Feb. 7. across the entrance. On the 7th the Fourth, Twenty-first and Forty-fourth were landed, with artillery and engineers, on the peninsula in rear of Fort Bowyer ; and the rest of the troops under command of Keane, who had recovered from his wound, were disembarked on
Feb. 8. the island. On the 8th ground was broken before Fort Bowyer under the direction of Burgoyne and
Feb. 11. Dickson, and by the morning of the 11th sixteen guns of various calibres were ready to open fire. The commandant thereupon surrendered, yielding up a garrison of nearly four hundred of all ranks with twenty-eight guns. The British casualties in this trifling affair just
Feb. 14. exceeded thirty killed and wounded. On the 14th a sloop of war arrived with the news that the preliminaries of peace between England and the United States had been signed on the 14th of December 1814, so that all the blood shed before New Orleans had been poured out in vain. The troops remained at the Isle of Dauphiné until the middle of March, when they sailed for England.

So ended this ill-fated expedition, of which it may be said that it provides perhaps the most striking warning upon record to British Ministers against conducting operations ashore upon the sole advice of naval officers. The whole project was based upon the expectation of prize-money only, as truly as were the expeditions to Carthagena in 1740 and to Ferrol in 1800, to mention only two out of many. A scapegoat had to be found for the mishap, and Lieutenant-colonel Mullens was

tried by court-martial and cashiered for disobedience to orders. The man who should have been tried by court-martial and shot was Sir Alexander Cochrane. The callous manner in which he deliberately placed the troops in a most dangerous situation, and then worked his faithful blue-jackets to death to keep them there—all with the principal object of filling his own pockets—cannot be too strongly condemned. He added to these delinquencies the further fault, doubtless also inspired by cupidity, of omitting to inform Lambert immediately of the conclusion of peace, from which cause the return of the troops to Europe, where they were urgently needed, was delayed.[1] On the other hand the exertions of his officers and men, who had neither rest nor sleep from the moment when Keane's detachment was first landed, who cheerfully endured, through week after week, the endless fatigue of rowing hundreds of miles, drenched every day and frozen every night—these cannot be too highly praised. 1815.

It remains to examine whether Pakenham made the best of the position, embarrassing and dangerous though it was, in which he found himself upon his arrival. The opinion of his regimental officers was that he might have rushed the American lines at any time, without condescending to silence their cannon, and that he ought to have done so on the 1st of January, if not earlier; for every day's delay enabled the enemy to strengthen his defences and to bring up more guns and troops. On the whole this view was probably sound. Lieutenant Leavock always declared that when he and his few men of the Twenty-first broke into Jackson's lines in the assault of the 8th of January, the whole of the American left was in flight, in fact that assailants and defenders were actually running away from each other in opposite directions at the same moment. There is nothing incredible in this story, the probable truth of which is confirmed by the panic of Morgan's troops before

[1] *Wellington Supp. Desp.* x. 269.

1815. the attack of Thornton's handful of men on the right bank of the Mississippi. Yet, as the loss would have been heavy, and the consequences of failure possibly annihilation, Pakenham can hardly be blamed if he hesitated, in face of an adverse opinion from such a man as Burgoyne, to take so formidable a risk.

Of the actual attack on the 8th of January, it must be said that the idea of a simultaneous onset upon both banks of the river was masterly in boldness of conception, and should have assured success. The delay in carrying Thornton's force to the right bank was due to the miscalculations of the naval officers and engineers, but, though Thornton's stroke did not fall with the full impetus that Pakenham had designed, it sufficed, as we have seen, to make Jackson almost despair of the situation. Should Pakenham therefore have delayed the assault upon Jackson's main position until Thornton had carried Patterson's battery? His Military Secretary declared that this would have been fatal. Thornton had crossed the river unobserved thanks only to a mist; and, had the signal been held back, his boats would have returned to bring over a further detachment of his troops. This would probably have led to an engagement of the two flotillas of armed vessels on the river itself; and as the American flotilla was, or at any rate was believed to be, the stronger, it would in all likelihood have destroyed that of the British. So great was the want of boats in the fleet that such a disaster would not only have left Thornton's little party hopelessly isolated upon the right bank, but would have cut off from the entire force its only means of retreat. The General was in fact hampered in this, as in all other operations, by Cochrane's unpardonable blunder in beginning the enterprise with only half the necessary number of small craft. Had Pakenham been apprised at the outset of the initial failure to launch the boats from the canal into the Mississippi, he would probably have countermanded the whole of his dispositions for the day; but as a

matter of fact he knew nothing about it until five 1815.
o'clock on the morning of the 8th—eight hours after the original difficulty had shown itself—when he judged it to be too late to make any change of plan. How it came about that he was so long kept in the dark upon this subject has never been explained. The naval officer in charge of the boats should certainly have informed him at once; but this does not acquit both Thornton and Pakenham's own staff-officers of very serious neglect. It was, as we have seen, probably the blunder of a staff-officer that permitted the Forty-fourth to go forward without their ladders and fascines; it was another staff-officer's blunder which led Pakenham to believe, when he ordered the rocket to be fired, that the Forty-fourth had had time to fetch its ladders and resume its place at the head of the storming column. There was no lack of staff-officers in the force, but they seem to have been either inefficient or ill-handled.

When all is said and done, however, the main fact remains that the chief reason for the failure of the assault was that the soldiers instead of running forward hung back, began to fire wildly and then ran away. "It was all very well to victimise old Mullens," writes Harry Smith in his *Autobiography*, "the fascines and ladders all could have been supplied by one word, which I will not name." This one word is obviously courage; and Harry Smith's criticism is amply justified by the success of Renny and Leavock in breaking into the American works. It has therefore been suggested that Pakenham should have chosen the Seventh and Forty-third, both of them splendid battalions fresh from the Peninsula, to form the main column of attack, instead of two imperfectly disciplined battalions such as the Twenty-first and Forty-fourth. But this is a question which cannot be discussed without a far more intimate knowledge of the circumstances at the moment than any historian can acquire. It is easy upon paper to set forth a multitude of arguments upon both sides, but it would be utterly unprofitable. The best troops

1815. run away, as well as the worst, upon occasion. If it were not so, military history would hardly be worth writing.

As to the correctness of Lambert's decision to abandon further operations and retreat, I think there can be no question. Success in a renewal of the offensive was extremely doubtful; the state of the supplies both for army and navy was extremely dangerous; and above all the object was not worth the risk. The over-worked officers and men of the fleet may well have felt indignant at so humiliating an end to all their labours, but for that they had chiefly to thank their Admiral. The temptations of prize-money as formerly distributed have fortunately been removed from the Fleet, so that we are not likely again to be plunged into disaster by the cupidity of admirals; but it is possible that naval officers have not yet realised their ignorance of the nature of operations ashore. In former days they gave their opinions upon such operations with childish assurance, and by no means the least of the offenders was Nelson himself.[1] There is no nobler service than the Royal Navy; but there are two sentences which should be writ large on the inner walls of the Admiralty and of the Cabinet's meeting-place. Never employ the fleet alone for operations which require the combined forces of Army and Navy. Never use those combined forces upon the sole advice either of a naval or of a military officer.

For the rest, the treaty of peace brought no advantage either to England or to the United States. The former gained no rectification of the frontier; the latter no satisfaction for captures, nor abandonment of the English doctrine concerning the impressment of sailors, which was the pretext alleged for American aggression. Upon a general balance of the results of the actual fighting by sea and by land, there was little to be claimed in favour of either party; but, in the matter of injury inflicted, the Americans, owing to the

[1] See Vol. IV. Part II. of this History, pp. 634-635.

losses caused by the British naval blockade, suffered incomparably more than the British. They were in fact utterly exhausted. Each country, however, learned respect for the other; and, in spite of much abusive language wasted on both sides by scribblers of all descriptions, the actual combatants in the field treated each other with humanity and even with friendliness. Commodore Barney, when he was taken prisoner, was received, to use his own words, "like a brother" by the British naval officers; and Jackson proved himself to be not only brave and able as a commander, but courteous in negotiation, modest in reporting his own achievements, and kind and considerate to the British wounded who fell into his hands. His countrymen in New Orleans emulated his example in the matter of the wounded with a generosity that did them infinite honour; and thus the repulse by the Mississippi, though the most crushing blow that was sustained by the British army in the course of the war, left behind it less bitterness than any other. Upon the whole the war, through the military failures on both sides, the early successes of the American frigates, and the final exhausting pressure of the British fleet upon American sea-borne trade, revealed to both nations their strength and their weakness, and did more than is suspected to preserve peace inviolate between them for a hundred years. 1815.

Authorities: There is little of importance in the Archives of the Record Office that has not been published. The best narratives on the English side are James's *Naval and Military Occurrences of the War of 1812*; Gleig's *Campaigns of the British Army at Washington and New Orleans*; Cooke's *Narrative of Events in the North of France and in the Attack on New Orleans*; Surtees's *Twenty-five Years in the Rifle Brigade*, and the *Autobiography* of Sir Harry Smith. There is one good letter in the *Pakenham Letters* (privately printed 1914), for a copy of which volume I am indebted to the kindness of Colonel Lord Longford. On the American side there is Mahan's *War of 1812*; Ingersoll's *History of the Second War*; and Letour's *War in Louisiana*.

CHAPTER XXI

1803–1814. The period which is now to be summarised is beyond question the greatest in our military history, bound up as it is with the names of Wellington, our one great general since Marlborough; Castlereagh, the ablest of our Ministers for War; and our best Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of York. It was time, indeed, after the miserable blunders of the first period of the Great War, that there should be some improvement; and to-day we are apt to forget, in the brilliance of the final triumphs in the Peninsula, the very murky years that preceded it from 1803 to 1808. The initial follies of Addington's government in organising the resources of the country for war, the no less grievous blunders of Pitt, and the sounder principles but grave miscalculations of Windham, are one and all sad proof of the unteachable ignorance of our Governors. Their choice of fields of operations was no less damning to their wit. There were Addington's helpless nibbles at the West Indies; Pitt's absurd little expedition to the Mediterranean, and his abortive diversion of troops to the Weser; Windham's childish project for the march of a column across South America, and the general mismanagement of the operations at Rio de la Plata; the costly and useless fighting in Egypt; and lastly the inexcusable despatch of Moore's force to Sweden. For five years British soldiers wandered distractedly about the world looking for a sphere of action; though all the while the peninsula of Italy—an ideal theatre for a fleet and

an army working in concert—lay open to them, with Sicily, Malta, and Gibraltar for bases, and the admirable despatches of Charles Stuart to be their guidance and inspiration. Until 1808 one enterprise only had been conceived by any British Government with insight and executed with swiftness and energy—the capture of Copenhagen and the seizure of the Danish fleet. 1803–1814.

Then at length the Peninsula was thrown open to our armies by Napoleon's invasion, and the genius of Arthur Wellesley apprehended the opportunity which was offered by such a base as Lisbon and such a country as Portugal. Castlereagh and Liverpool also, after deciding to make their effort there, threw into it the bulk of their strength, and supported Wellington with all possible loyalty. But there was still much waste of force owing to the vacillation of Ministers in dealing with the treacherous and corrupt Court of Naples ; and the expedition to the Scheldt in 1809, though great in conception, was too hazardous, too doubtful of success, and too little favoured by military opinion, to have been so lightly undertaken. Wellington declared that he could not have fed the army which went to the Scheldt, even had it been given to him ; but based upon Cadiz or Minorca — or even upon Sicily—under Thomas Graham or John Hope, it could have mightily embarrassed Soult in Andalusia or Suchet on the east coast of Spain. From beginning to end, therefore, even of the second period of the war, there is much room for criticism in the employment of the troops ; and it must be added further that, by 1814, the question of keeping the ranks of the army filled at all had become an exceedingly anxious one.

It will be remembered that, after the schemes of Addington and Pitt for maintaining a military force had been laughed out of existence, resort had been made to the Militia, recruited by compulsory service in the form of the ballot, to make good the wastage of the Army by war. The system of balloting for the Militia being vitiated by the permission to provide substitutes, Castle-

1803–1814. reagh subdivided the Militia into two parts. First there was the Regular Militia, levied for the most part by ballot, but with liberty for all balloted men to furnish substitutes. This was meant, like the Special Reserve of 1908, to provide drafts for the Regular Army; and authority was given from time to time by Act of Parliament to batches of ten or twelve thousand of these militiamen to transfer themselves to the Line. Incidentally it may be observed that the competition of recruiting officers for militiamen, when such a batch was about to be set free, led to scenes of great disorder about the barracks. Athletic subalterns, such as George Napier, would challenge a dozen recruits to a jumping match on condition that they should join him unless they could beat him; but a far more common resource was "treating," or in plain words, alcohol. Secondly, there was the Local Militia, which, like the Territorial Force of 1908, was designed to absorb the Volunteers, and was recruited likewise by the ballot; but in the first instance substitution was forbidden and personal service made compulsory. The Local Militiaman's term of service was four years; and any individual in the force was at liberty to enlist in the Line whenever he pleased. To feed the Local Militia, Castlereagh's original plan had been to compel two or three hundred thousand men between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five, chosen by ballot from the mass of the nation, to undergo military training for a fixed time without pay, as a part of their duty to their country, and in case of an invasion to make them serve in the Line. This last provision, however, was not brought before Parliament; and for want of it Castlereagh's whole scheme gradually collapsed.

When the first batch of Local Militia finished their term of service, there were no trained men to take their place. Castlereagh, therefore, was obliged to allow a considerable number of them to re-engage for a second term; and this to all intent introduced into

the Local Militia the fatal principle of substitution. The Local Militia Act, as was the case with the Militia Act of 1757, had been drawn with the purpose of passing the entire manhood of the nation through the ranks by batches in periods of four years. But when men were allowed to re-enlist for a second term, for a bounty, they became substitutes for other men who were *ipso facto* exempted from a national duty by the prolonged service of their brethren. From this cause, and from others which I have set down at length in another work,[1] the Regular and Local Militia, instead of supplementing each other, became competitors, hampering one another ; so much so that another twelve months of war would have seen the entire recruiting machinery of the Army broken down. And break down it will and must in any long and serious war, unless it be founded upon compulsory National Training. 1803–1814.

The men once provided by Parliament, the Commander-in-Chief and his staff at the Horse Guards had already perfected their organisation for turning them to account. The Duke of York's ideal was that every regiment of infantry should have two battalions, the first for service abroad and the second for service at home, and that the battalion at home should supplement that abroad. It does not appear that the second battalion furnished drafts regularly to the first. More often these were drawn from the recruits enlisted in ordinary course at the depôts, and from the batches of militiamen who were periodically turned over to the Line. Hence, when a battalion abroad had been very seriously depleted, the Duke was always urgent for the second battalion to take its place, and absorb the men of the first battalion on the spot, while the officers and senior non-commissioned officers should return home to remake the battalion. The course of the war, however, upset this arrangement. A few regiments had no second battalions at all ; some had

[1] The County Lieutenancies and the Army.

1803–1814. both battalions upon active service; and Wellington, as we have seen, was so unwilling to part with officers and men of experience, that he would amalgamate two weak battalions into one, rather than accept two strong but unhardened battalions in their place. This difficulty was never completely overcome, and indeed could only have been overcome by the addition to every regiment of a third battalion. Such a solution never occurred, apparently, to Castlereagh, though it was foreshadowed by Sir Henry Calvert, the Adjutant-general. Sir Henry's idea was to abolish the Regular Militia altogether, to make the Local Militia a part of its county regiment, having the same uniform, facings, and equipment, and to transfer men by the encouragement of bounties to the second battalion, just as the second battalion was intended to transfer them to the first. Had Castlereagh adopted this scheme, insisting always upon the personal service of men balloted for the Local Militia, he would have rendered a transcendent service to his country.

So much for the broad principles of military policy and the measures for organising the population for defence. Let us now turn to the departments that govern the Army, and first of all to the civil administration comprehended under the name of the War Office and its chief, the Secretary for War. The functions of the War Office had by this time become almost exclusively financial, being concerned with regimental accounts, through these with the various regimental agents, and through them again with the business of regimental clothing. The staff of the Office had increased enormously, the number of clerks having swelled, between 1798 and 1806, from fifty to one hundred and seventeen, though the establishment of the Army within the same period had been augmented only from two to three hundred thousand. One reason for this influx of clerks was no doubt the circumstance, already chronicled in a previous volume, that the War Office had taken over much of the

accountants' work formerly done by the agents ; but a far more powerful cause was that the Office was famous for jobbery and offered extraordinary facilities for it. The appointment of all clerks, with the regulation of their salaries, as also of all officials of the Barrack-master's department, lay with the Secretary at War ; and, since the fees formerly received by various officials in the Office had been swept into a common stock called the " Fee Fund," a large annual sum was placed at the disposal of the Secretary at War, over which the Treasury had absolutely no control. Such a temptation was far too great for the ordinary politician, and positively overpowering to corrupt and dishonest men—such as Sir George Yonge—or to ingrained jobbers—such as William Windham. 1803–1814.

The work at large was distributed into two branches, General Business and Accounts. The daily labour imposed upon the clerks was five hours' attendance in the office, with liberty to take home such tasks as they wished, and to receive extra pay for doing them there. In addition to their salaries many clerks held sinecure allowances. One was allowed to supply coal for the garrison of Gibraltar at a profit ; another was a barrack-master ; a third, besides wages of £750 and a pension of £100, possessed the sole right of printing lists of the Army, Militia, and Volunteers, which brought him annually yet £350 more. The Chief Messenger, by dint of charging extravagant fees for the delivery of messages, secured to himself an annual income of no less than £500. Two more messengers, who had been servants to Sir George Yonge and Lord Liverpool, drew £30 in salary and over £200 a year in fees, yet were never seen at the Office. In fact the whole place was a sink of jobbery and extortion, the more repulsive since there were hundreds of deserving officers, crippled by long service and wounds, who were starving on a pittance of half-pay.

The chief business of the War Office was the examination and settlement of regimental accounts,

1803–1814. which function had been taken over from the regimental agents through the medium of the special regimental paymasters appointed in 1797.[1] These new paymasters were soon discovered to be inefficient; and the result was a steady augmentation of the number of clerks in the War Office, and as steady an accumulation of arrears. In 1807 there were over sixteen hundred regimental accounts still unsettled, more than one hundred of which were of earlier date than 1783. For this there were two principal reasons: first, the inaccuracy of the paymasters, necessitating sometimes over two hundred corrections in a single account; secondly, the extreme complication of the system of allowances.[2] Recommendations were made for the remedy of these evils; but so long as regiments were treated as the colonel's property—that is to say, as independent units instead of component parts of a single organism—it was hopeless to think of getting rid of them altogether.

From the War Office I pass to another civilian department, the Treasury, which, through its control of the Commissariat, was in charge of the vital business of transport and supply. The history of the Commissariat during the twenty-one years of the Great War is singular. In 1793 there was a nominal Commissary-general, whose office appears to have been a sinecure, for no money was issued to him, and all contracts for

[1] See Vol. IV. of this History, pp. 898-899.

[2] Table of Allowances:

1. Beer Money: 1d. per man per diem.
2. To inn-keepers in stationary quarters, ½d. for every billeted man.
3. To inn-keepers for every man victualled on march, 11d.
4. To men (married) sleeping out of barracks, 1d. + beer money.
5, 6. For extra prices of bread and meat (regulated by market prices).
7. For articles for cleaning arms, 2s. 9d. per man per annum.
8. For alteration of clothing, 2s. 6d. per man per annum.

It was pointed out that Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8 could be consolidated, and 1 lb. of bread per day per man be substituted for them.

food and carriage were made by the Treasury. In 1797 a beginning of decentralisation was made by the appointment of District Commissaries to make local contracts at home, some of whom corresponded directly with the Treasury and some with the Commissary-general; but after twelve months the whole of these were placed under the Commissary-general. That functionary's duty and authority were, however, strictly limited; and the general distribution of duty and responsibility was as follows. Contracts for the feeding of troops in camp lay with the Commissary-general; of troops in barracks with the Barrack-master-general; of troops in charge of field-works and beacons with the general commanding the district; and of troops abroad with the Victualling Board. Stores for troops at home were the business of the Barrack-master-general; stores for troops abroad that of the Commissaries of Transport. Add to this extraordinary confusion the facts that every Commissariat officer received a commission from the War Office and a "constitution" from the Treasury, that he drew part of his pay from the one office and part from the other, and that he was thus irrevocably bound to serve two masters, and we arrive at a result thoroughly characteristic of British administration. Happily a commissary of wide experience, Sir Brook Watson, who had served with the Duke of York in Flanders, intervened to put an end to these absurdities; and by 1806 the whole of these multifarious contracts had been placed in sole charge of the Commissary-general. 1803–1814.

We learn without surprise, however, that the change was effected at the cost of much unnecessary expense. In 1805 the Commissariat establishment for duty at home counted, including the Commissary-general but exclusive of the central office in London, just one hundred District Commissaries, Assistants of various grades, and Central Commissaries, with one hundred and fifteen subordinates, chiefly store-keepers, but comprehending a sprinkling of master-bakers and

1803–1814. transport-officers.[1] The Central Commissaries numbered forty-three, one to each English county, and had been appointed in contemplation of a French invasion; but, as the Duke of York had wisely parcelled out the country into thirteen Military Districts, and there were already nineteen District Commissaries, we have here clear evidence that, though the Treasury might admit the War Office into partnership, it would have no dealing with the Horse Guards. However, upon the appointment of a new Commissary-general, one Mr. Coffin, in 1806, Central Commissaries were abolished—which was well—and with them, which was probably a great mistake, both the master-bakers and the store-keepers. Strangely enough throughout all this period the Commissary-general had no control over Commissaries abroad, so that any officer who went upon active service passed beyond his jurisdiction, and lost touch with him completely. Moreover, it must be noted that, as in Marlborough's time, the Commissariat's duty to an Army, whether at home or abroad, was limited to the provision of bread for the men, forage for the animals, and, if troops were encamped, of wood for fuel. All other supplies were furnished by the departments of the Quarter-master-general, Barrack-master-general, and Medical Department; and the sole function of the Commissariat in respect of these other articles was to stir up the right department.

With the Waggon-Train, being the creation of the Commander-in-Chief, the Treasury and War Office had of course no concern; nor did they make the slightest attempt to use it even for the purpose of training their own officers. In fact the Treasury looked upon its duties of transport and supply as matters purely of contract and accounts, which the ordinary com-

[1] Home Establishment of the Commissariat, 1805: 1 Commissary-general; 19 District Commissaries; 25 Assistant Commissaries; 12 Acting Commissaries; 43 Central Commissaries; 23 Clerks; 83 Storekeepers; 5 Master-bakers; 1 Director of Waggons; 1 Inspector of Waggons; 2 Conductors.

mercial clerk was judged competent to fulfil. The idea of training men for those most difficult tasks, the feeding of an army in the field, and the keeping its stores and supplies abreast of it, was quite foreign to the official mind. I have myself perused the accounts of Commissaries in the field for long periods, not only in the Record Office but also in private collections of papers, and I have never yet found among them any scheme or account of the organisation of land-transport. Thus it was that, as I have written elsewhere, Wellington was obliged at the outset of the Peninsular War to teach his Commissaries the very alphabet of the business of transport ; though, finding willing and intelligent workers among them, he was able to build up an extremely efficient Commissariat service. But the Treasury recognised only two descriptions of Commissaries abroad, those for the stores and those for accounts ; and by this very recognition it showed its ignorance of its business, for such a division of functions was unpractical and absurd. 1803–1814.

In 1809 a new departure was made by the appointment of a Commissary-in-Chief, who took over the superintendence of the Commissariat both at home and abroad, and became the sole channel of communication between the Treasury and its officials oversea. The person selected for the post, marvellous to say, was a soldier, Colonel James Willoughby Gordon, sometime Military Secretary at the Horse Guards, and in 1812 for a short period Wellington's Quartermaster-general. After the old fashion he received his appointment and £4 a day from the Treasury, his commission, £3 a day, and a Major-general's field-allowance from the War Office. This individual hung about the skirts of the ignoble politicians who paid their court at Carleton House ; and frequent glimpses that I have caught of him, both within and without that unsavoury environment, have inspired me with a feeling very remote from respect. However, he accomplished really good work during his two years'

1803–1814. tenure of the post of Commissary-in-Chief. He could not do away with the childish practice of equipping his subordinates with a double commission from two different offices ; but he contrived at least that they should receive their salaries from his own department only, and did something by salutary regulations to encourage good conduct and discipline among them. It was he who ordained that all Commissaries must begin their career at the bottom, and serve for a certain time in every grade in succession before they could be promoted to the next ; and this was creditable to him, for all powers of advancement were vested exclusively in himself. He also showed courteous attention to all of Wellington's wishes and representations concerning his department ; but his reign was too short to correct many old abuses. During the long war in the West Indies, from 1794 to 1798, many of the Commissaries by shameless fraud had made large fortunes ; one having amassed as much as £87,000 ; and their examples had infected the whole service. There was much malpractice at home owing to the greed of forage-contractors, and more than enough even in the Peninsula, in spite of all the efforts of Charles Stuart and Wellington. Such is inevitably the case when men in receipt of small emoluments are charged with the handling of large sums ; and the temptation to Assistant Commissaries in Portugal was the greater, inasmuch as the Treasury paid them only five shillings a day, whereas their brethren of the same rank in England received fifteen. But the ways of the Treasury are past finding out.

Upon the resignation of Gordon a successor was found for him in Mr. Herries, who had made some reputation both as a Colonel of Volunteer Light Horse and as a financier. His appointment, which took place in October 1811, was hailed with satisfaction by the Commissioners appointed to enquire into Military Expenditure. The duties of the office, so they averred, were all civil and should therefore be

executed by a civilian ; and thus they perpetuated a blunder which was not rectified until 1888. The mistake was the less pardonable inasmuch as General Don, an officer of very great experience, had laid down certain rules which should have guided the Commissaries into the right track. All commissariat-officers, pronounced Don, should be properly trained for their work in the field. No army should move without a field-bakery. No expedition should be sent on active service without taking with it a part of the Royal Waggon Train, to be attached to regiments, battalions, and departments. A Commissariat Train should go with them to bring forward bread and forage ; and only transport additional to this should be hired by contract. Bread and forage should be supplied to the troops by the Commissariat in peace as well as in war, and at home as well as abroad, in order to teach the Commissaries their duty. By these propositions Don showed rightly that the duties of the Commissariat were essentially military and not civil ; but he was in advance of his time and far too practical to find favour with the Treasury. 1803–1814.

Pursuing my review of the civil departments, I turn to the Medical. Doctors and surgeons, of course, formed part of the staff of each regiment and wore the regimental uniform until well within living memory, having been originally mere servants of the colonels. Until 1793 the Medical Department of the Army was governed by two men, the Physician-general, and the Surgeon-general, who was also Inspector of Infirmaries. In 1793 the Inspectorship of Infirmaries was constituted a separate office, with pay of ten shillings a day; and the holder, together with the Physician and Surgeon-general, each of them receiving two pounds a day, composed the Medical Board, which reigned supreme over all medical business in the Army. To these three was entrusted the appointment of all medical attendants for hospitals, or in other words control of all patronage and promotion in their depart-

1803–1814. ment ; and in addition to their salaries they enjoyed many perquisites and private practice. The provision of medicines and surgical instruments (except in the case of regimental doctors, who always supplied their own) was a monopoly granted by patent in 1747 to an individual, styled the Apothecary-general. The actual tenant of the office at this time—probably a blameless person in himself—received ten shillings a day for the privilege of gathering in the profits of this monopoly, and concerned himself no further with the business.

Experience of the campaigns in Flanders in 1793–1794 showed how abominably evil was the whole system ; and in 1798 the Medical Board was reconstituted of the same three officials, each on a salary of two pounds a day, but with the patronage parted among them severally. To the Physician-general fell the recommendation of physicians to the Army, and the inspection of medicines ; to the Surgeon-general the recommendation of staff and regimental doctors, and the direction of depôts of medicines ; and to the Inspector of Hospitals the recommendation of lower attendants in hospitals.

This arrangement was, if possible, worse than the last. Physicians of the army were appointed without diploma of any kind, and were often placed over the heads of qualified practitioners ; patronage and promotion were very arbitrarily distributed ; and in short the jobbery, favouritism, and corruption were such as to discourage any good man from entering the service. Evil example in high places of course found imitation below ; and the general hospitals were hotbeds of waste and dishonest dealing in favour of every one except the patients. The Apothecary-general's department likewise was honeycombed with evils. The goods delivered were bad, ill-packed, and excessively dear ; and the office was so straitly hide-bound by routine that it actually sent out sago, rice, and opium at enormous cost to Ceylon, without pausing to reflect that those com-

modities, being grown in the island, could be obtained of better quality and infinitely cheaper on the spot. In fact, whether in the matter of men or material, the head-quarters of the Medical Department were saturated with abuses. The Duke of York could find no words hard enough for the Medical Board; and the climax came when, amid all the anxiety and wretchedness caused by the fatal epidemic during the expedition to the Scheldt, the three members remained comfortably in London and refused to transport their precious bodies to the front. It may indeed be pleaded for them that they were not young, and would have been absolutely useless even if they had repaired to Holland; but their attitude of helpless yet complacent expectation was not calculated to endear them either to the Army or to the public. 1803–1814.

Thus, although the Medical Staff of the Army at large, as distinguished from the regimental doctors, numbered over three hundred physicians, surgeons, apothecaries, and purveyors, with salaries varying from £950 to £120 a year, one hears little of any kind—and nothing that is good—about any of them. Nor is this surprising, for it lay within the competency of the Surgeon-general to nominate any one of them, whether qualified or not, to be a Principal Medical Officer, and so to add five shillings a day to his pay. Of regimental surgeons, on the contrary, one hears much, and generally much that is good. Wellington's chief medical officer, Dr. McGrigor, had served in all parts of the world with different regiments, both horse and foot, knew the British officer and soldier, and loved them both. We have seen how, finding it hopeless to get any good from the base-hospitals in the Peninsula, he pleaded for regimental hospitals in order to keep the base-hospitals as empty as possible; and, being supported heartily by Wellington, succeeded in carrying his point. Nothing at first sight could seem less economical or more wasteful than such a multiplicity of different establishments; yet, in exist-

1803–1814. ing circumstances, the system was entirely justified by success. McGrigor himself had tested it when he sailed with Baird's contingent from India to Egypt in 1801; when, although there were none but regimental surgeons with the force, the medical arrangements had worked smoothly and well. The secret was that the regimental surgeons, proud of their corps and anxious to keep its ranks as full as possible, worked with the greatest ardour not only to restore their patients to health but to send them back to the front as disciplined soldiers. Being constantly in touch with every man, they knew his constitution and disposition, and possessed, moreover, a very keen eye for malingering. In the base-hospital at Belem, on the contrary, all was perfunctory and orderless. Convalescents were allowed to roam about at will under no control, and, being marched up to the front in parties under non-commissioned officers or officers whom they did not know, were the perpetrators of all the worst outrages that disgraced the Army. McGrigor was indeed an able man in his profession, a thorough soldier and an excellent public servant. He was prompt in disencumbering the army of really disabled patients, and equally prompt in restoring the slightly ill or wounded to the ranks; and he is deservedly honoured to this day as the father of British military hygiene.

From the healer of the body to the ghostly counsellor is a natural transition, and I come next to the department of the Chaplain-general. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the chaplain was an essential part of every regiment's establishment, with pay of 6s. 3d. a day, obtaining his commission by presentation or purchase, according to the piety or cupidity of the colonel. Gradually during the course of the eighteenth century the chaplains ceased to attend their corps; and the office became a sinecure, still within the gift of the colonel, and generally performed by deputy at the rate of half a crown a day.

When the Duke of York went to Flanders in 1793 there was but one chaplain, the Reverend John Gamble of the Thirty-seventh, who accompanied the army. Having noted this, Sir Ralph Abercromby, before starting for the West Indies in 1795, summoned the chaplains of all his battalions to assemble at headquarters in order to decide which of them should accompany him. Not one presented himself; every man of them pleading the colonel's promise, given when they purchased their commissions, that personal attendance should not be required of them. Subsequent experience showed that the case of Abercromby's army was not singular. Between 1803 and 1808 there were sent over sea nine expeditions of a strength varying from thirty-five hundred to fourteen thousand men. Out of these nine, three, namely Craig's to the Mediterranean, Cathcart's to Copenhagen, and Moore's to Sweden, were attended by one chaplain; while the remaining six, Cathcart's to the Weser, Baird's to the Cape, Auchmuty's to South America, Beresford's to Madeira, Spencer's to Southern Spain, and Wellesley's to Portugal,[1] representing altogether some fifty thousand men, were without a chaplain of any kind whatever. 1803–1814.

Upon assuming the chief command at the Horse Guards the Duke of York took the matter up, and in 1796 introduced drastic reforms. The old system was condemned root and branch. Existing chaplains were informed that they must do duty in person with their regiments, or retire on a pension of four shillings a day; and colonels received £500 in the infantry and £700 in the cavalry to compensate them for the loss of the presentation. Gamble, who was the Duke's adviser throughout, then received the appointment of Chaplain-general, with a salary of £1 a day; and it

[1] So says the report of the Commission of Military Enquiry, but there appear to have been at least two brigade chaplains, Mr. Bradford and Mr. Ormsby, both of whom left interesting books behind them, Bradford's having been published in 1809.

1803–1814. was arranged that the balance of 2s. 3d. which remained over from the regimental pay of the retired chaplains, together with the full pay whenever a regimental chaplaincy fell vacant, should be placed in his hands to form a general Chaplains' Fund. As every single chaplain, except two in the Life Guards, accepted the pension, Gamble's financial duties were at first very onerous ; but he did his work well, and in 1799 was rewarded by the annexation of his office to the Staff of Great Britain, by an allowance of £100 for clerical assistance, and by a special grant of £200 to himself. This was only fair, for, as Chaplain-general, he held both a military and a civil commission ; and the Treasury, always ruthless towards those who have no power to resist, took care to mulct him in income-tax upon both, to the aggregate amount of half a crown in the pound. By the end of 1799 the Chaplains' Fund had accumulated to a sum that was worth investing, and by 1805 had reached the respectable total of £55,000.

In the year 1806, the time being ripe, all chaplains were struck off the regimental establishments. The Chaplains' Fund was sold out of Consols and poured into the exchequer ; and £15,000 were placed on the estimates for the chaplains' department, with a saving to the country of £18,000 a year. These £15,000 served for the support not only of officiating clergymen and retired chaplains, who were still embarrassingly numerous,[1] but for twelve garrison-chaplains in England, eighteen more abroad, and eleven brigade-chaplains on foreign service. It is interesting to note, as an example of the difficulty of dealing with the Army as a whole in those days, that the Office of Ordnance still kept its own chaplains at its own rates of pay for the Artillery and Engineers, of course exempt from the jurisdiction of the Chaplain-general ; though the Commissioners of Enquiry expressly

[1] There were 130 officiating clergymen and 136 retired chaplains, of whom only one had the grace to die in the course of the year.

recommended that these gentlemen also, as was only reasonable, should be swept into the Chaplain-general's net. But the Duke of York had not yet done with the Cavalry and Infantry. He was eager for the institution of personal touch between the chaplains and the men ; and, reflecting that £115 a year—the ordinary pay of a chaplain—offered no great temptation to men of ability and education, he obtained in 1807 the grant of a major's pay—£292 a year—for all brigade-chaplains upon foreign service, with the provision that they should always officiate in person. There are many who remember that the Duke of York strenuously upheld the use of the lash in the British army ; there are few who know that he was the first who sought earnestly to supplant mere penalties by moral influence. 1803–1814.

It was, however, long before the Duke's reforms could produce their full effect. In February 1811, Wellington complained that there was only one chaplain, an excellent man, with the army. There had been more, but one and all of them had made out a pitiful case for leave to return home immediately after their arrival. The result was that Methodism had spread fast among all ranks, and that Methodist meetings were regularly held and attended by both officers and men. To Methodism in the abstract Wellington had no objection. "The meeting of soldiers in their cantonments to sing psalms or hear a sermon read by one of their comrades is, in the abstract, perfectly innocent," he wrote ; "and it is a better way of spending their time than many others to which they are addicted ; but it may become otherwise." In plain words, Wellington did not think it good for discipline that officers and non-commissioned officers should assemble to listen to the exhortations of privates ; nor that even regimental officers should openly rebuke sins to which their superiors might visibly and demonstrably be prone. There was also the danger, well known to all employers

1803–1814. of labour, lest special favour might be shown by nonconformists, holding the stripe or a commission, to members of their own congregation. But Wellington was far too wise to attempt to combat a good influence, even though it might turn to evil, by any means than by one still better; and he therefore pleaded for the despatch of a staff of what he described as "respectable" clergymen, by which he meant men whose character and conduct would command the respect of all ranks. He admitted that the pay was in itself sufficient to attract the class of clergyman that he desired,[1] but considered that the retiring allowance was too small, and the term of service—ten years—too long for continuous personal attendance; and he therefore advocated the reduction of the term of service to six years. Religious instruction, as he said, was not only a moral necessity to every soul in the army, but of the greatest support and aid to military discipline and order.

The response of the Horse Guards was most sympathetic. Sir Harry Calvert, then Adjutant-general, promised to send out chaplains "selected with the utmost care and circumspection by the first prelates of the country"; and to instruct them to conclude every service with a short practical sermon. In due time the reverend gentlemen appeared, but proved—taken altogether—to be not quite well chosen for their duties. The first prelates in the country, however conscientious, were in those days hardly the persons to understand what was needed. A clergyman who is to appeal to sailors and soldiers must be first

[1] Mr. Oman (*Wellington's Army*, p. 329) says that Wellington in one of his letters condemned the pay as too small, but in the letter from which we both of us quote, Wellington says, "I believe the income, while they are employed abroad, to be sufficiently good"; and certainly major's pay and allowance was not ungenerous. But Mr. Oman has no knowledge of the part played by the Duke of York in this matter of chaplains, otherwise he would not have given the credit to Wellington instead of to the Duke. I myself should have been as ignorant as he, had I not discovered the report of the Commissioners of Military Enquiry in an obscure recess of Windsor Castle.

of all a man, and only secondarily a priest. If he be a saint as well as a man, so much the better ; but the most important point is that he should regard himself rather as a learner than as a teacher. There was one in Wellington's army who, in action, was always to be found dangerously near to the firing-line, and met all remonstrances with the answer that his primary duty was "to be of service to those now departing this life." The influence of such a man for good was likely to be boundless, but he appears to have stood alone. The more part of the chaplains seem to have been morally correct, but helpless in their strange surroundings, ignorant of the world, ignorant of men, and therefore inefficient. Experience of men was not so easily gained in those days, when the cure of souls was associated rather with country villages than with large towns. The routine of a country parish a century ago was beyond comparison duller than at present ; and all parish tradition regarded the recruiting sergeant as a common enemy, and a recruit as an outcast from decent society. In any case the chaplains as a body were a failure. Some were unnerved when confronted with the stern realities of war ; some were bewildered by the panic-stricken importunities of Methodist converts who had lost hope and found hell-fire ; others were offended at the complacency of those who had passed through the stage of despair and emerged with confident assurance of their own salvation. The work was new to these pastors, and there was no one to show them how to do it ; yet the seed sown by that one chaplain, who refused to be kept out of fire, has borne fruit in our own time an hundredfold. 1803–1814.

The ground is now cleared for dealing with the purely military side of the Army, and first with the Horse Guards. This office, except for a short interval between 1809 and 1811, remained under the admirable direction of the Duke of York as Commander-in-Chief. It was organised into three principal departments ; that of the Adjutant-general, which after 1807 took

1803–1814. over the duty of recruiting in addition to the previous charge of discipline, armament, and clothing; that of the Quarter-master-general; and that of the Military Secretary. The Adjutant-general throughout this period was Harry Calvert, who continued to do the whole of his work most excellently with one deputy, three assistants, and twenty clerks. The Quarter-master-general was till 1812 Sir Robert Brownrigg, and afterwards James Willoughby Gordon; and his staff consisted of a deputy, five assistants, two draftsmen, and six clerks. The Military Secretary was until 1812 James Willoughby Gordon, and then Henry Torrens. All of these officers were men of decided ability, and Calvert, in particular, was remarkable alike for high character and excellent understanding. Under their administration the government of the Army was conducted with efficiency and without friction; while the unfailing industry of the Duke of York, his accessibility to all officers, his readiness to look into all grievances, and his unswerving loyalty to his masters in the Cabinet, made him an ideal chief. If the whole business of the military forces and of the war could have been left to the Horse Guards, there would have been infinitely less bungling in the organisation of the military strength of the country, and a far smaller proportion of abortive and absurd expeditions.

In a review of British armies in the field at this period one can hardly touch upon any but that of Wellington, of which, however, there is little new to be said. Of his staff I have already spoken in a previous chapter, but something remains to be added of the period when his force had risen to a strength which compelled him to distribute it into three corps under the command respectively of Hill, Beresford, and himself. From that moment, and even from the rather earlier period when the mountains and passes of the Pyrenees forbade him to look to everything with his own eyes, we find that his Quarter-master-general, George Murray, becomes in actual fact the

Chief of Wellington's Staff. We see Murray on not a few occasions, and notably during the manœuvres before and after the two battles of Sorauren, issuing important orders of his own motion and by his own authority—sometimes indeed displaying a wider grasp of the strategic situation than did his great chief. Simultaneously we gather from scattered notices in the printed narratives and journals of various officers that Murray's reputation at this time was greatly enhanced in the army, and that he was regarded as second only to Wellington in ability and even as capable of taking his place. This is evidence that, when occasion required it, Wellington could delegate authority, and forsake his original principle of directing everything for himself. The result was to raise the standard of work performed by the staff, and to give far better training than heretofore to its members. 1803–1814.

It is commonly said of Wellington that he could not, or at any rate did not, train men to any higher command than that of a division ; and so far as concerns the older divisional leaders—such as William Stewart, Picton, or Leith—this is undoubtedly true. But the limitation of ability lay in these men themselves, not in their chief. The younger divisional leaders, and even more the younger brigadiers such as Barnes and Colborne, were officers of a very different stamp from their forerunners ; and among the younger members of the staff Pakenham, in spite of his failure at New Orleans, and still more notably Harry Smith, showed, when they came to independent command, that they were true pupils of Wellington.

Moreover, it must not be overlooked that the so-called Staff Corps, though composed of officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates even as any other regiment of the army, had during the Peninsular War done much to justify its name. Augmented by 1809 to ten companies of four officers and fifty men apiece, chiefly artificers, the least of whom received fifteen pence a day and six men in every company two shillings,

1803–1814. the Staff Corps was the particular child of the Quarter-master-general. The officers, selected from every branch of the army, not excluding the Staff College at Marlow, were examined by the colonel, an Engineer, in drawing, trigonometrical surveying, and field-fortification before they were admitted; and it is noteworthy that the two most remarkable feats of engineering achieved during the war—the suspension bridge at Alcantara and the bridge of boats on the Adour—were the work of Major Sturgeon and Captain Todd of the Staff Corps. There was no purchase system in the Corps; the colonel had no interest in the clothing, which was provided by the War Office; and the Quarter-master-general was supreme over all. With proper handling and a little larger life on active service the Staff Corps bade fair to become an institution whose value would be unfailing and permanent.

Passing from the staff to the regiments of cavalry and infantry, it will be well to speak for a moment of the officers in general. From whence, it may be asked, did they all come? In the early years of the war, when men were raised for rank, we know that commissions were distributed broadcast, very often to most undesirable individuals; and, as is almost inevitable at times of pressure, particularly under Parliamentary Government, a good many unfit persons became officers during the latter period of the war also. Courts-martial upon officers were very common, rarely on account of misconduct in the field, but frequently for brawling, insubordination, and neglect of duty. Duels, though there was plenty of occasion for them at Lisbon, were few and far between in the Peninsula, first, because officers, as a rule, were too busy to get into mischief, and secondly, because Wellington discouraged duelling. But there were a certain number of Irish squireens, who were never happy unless they were picking quarrels or sending challenges. Taken altogether, the tone among officers was probably as high as in the present day,

though their efficiency varied according to that of their regimental commanders. Still, as a body they were good, and worthy both professionally and socially to hold the King's Commission. One of them, Kincaid of the Rifle Brigade, lamented that more of the aristocratic families—as he called them—did not send their sons into the army, since he had noticed that officers from this class were able to secure more willing obedience with less effort than others. No one who knows anything of the subject will dispute the advantage which the habit of command, inherited through many generations and acquired in childhood, may confer upon a man ; but the point is whether Kincaid's accusation against the "aristocracy," of shirking service in the army, can be maintained. 1803–1814.

The question is most difficult to answer, for in England a very large proportion of the true aristocracy is untitled, and a very large and increasing proportion of the titled families is not aristocratic ; but, applying such rude tests as are possible, I judge that Kincaid was completely mistaken.[1] The vast majority of the officers of the Peninsular Army were sons and

[1] This discovery was a great surprise to me, for I had always imagined Kincaid to be correct. The only test that I could apply was to go through the Army Lists of different periods, and note the number of regimental officers, excluding colonels-in-chief, who bore hereditary or courtesy titles. This is, I grant, extremely crude, and likely always to be misleading ; for in the first place it leaves the old but untitled county families out of account, and in the second it ignores the accident of new creations in the peerage ; but still it gives some clue. The following table shows the number of regimental officers, below the rank of colonel, who bore hereditary or courtesy titles, at five different dates :

	1808.	1813.	1850.	1870.	1899.
Household Cavalry .	2	6	27	23	24
Line Cavalry . .	29	56	17	15	37
R.A. and R.E. . .	3	3	10	15	13
Foot Guards . .	49	45	52	62	49
Line Infantry . .	75	85	83	49	71
	158	195	189	164	194

The conclusion would seem to be that the number of aristocratic

1803–1814. grandsons of the lesser or greater landed gentry, descended in many cases immediately from younger sons of various professions, but deriving at the distance of a generation or two from the old stock. It is, however, true that the possession of wealth and of political influence tended to gain for "aristocratic" officers very speedy promotion and an undue share of appointments, especially as aides-de-camp, on the staff. Indeed, many writers of the Light Division make very much of Lord March's return to regimental duty from the staff, as though it were something unusual, and point the moral that he was badly wounded at once. Hence the true significance of Kincaid's criticism may be that he rarely met "aristocratic" officers doing duty with their companies; and herein he was possibly correct. On the other hand, the higher grades of the Peninsular Army were full of aristocrats, who showed themselves for the most part to be efficient men. Wellington was the younger son of an Irish peer, as also was Edward Pakenham; and Beresford was the natural son of the first Marquis of Waterford. Hope succeeded his father in the Earldom of Hopetoun; Colville was a son of Lord Colville of Culross; the incorrigible William Stewart was a younger son of the house of Galloway, and Edward Paget came of the house of Anglesey. Graham was a Scottish laird; Craufurd, Leith, and George Murray were sons of Scottish lairds of old family. Lord Dalhousie's title is self-explanatory; so also is that of Lord Aylmer, who for some time was Wellington's Adjutant-general. Picton was the son of a Welsh squire, and Colborne of a burgess of Lymington. Of the older generation Sir Charles Grey came of a very old and highly distinguished Northumberland family; Ralph Abercromby was sprung from a Scottish laird; so likewise, in the second generation, was James

officers is a fairly constant quantity, and that they tend to increase in the scientific branches of the Artillery and Engineers, which shows that they are not worse equipped with brains than their fellows.

Craig ; David Dundas was son of a Scottish merchant and John Moore of an extremely accomplished Scottish doctor. 1803–1814.

As to the men, it is more difficult to speak with precision. Abercromby recorded that the first lot of militiamen swept into the army in 1799 were, taken altogether, superior to ordinary recruits ; and it is possible that this superiority, though not very strongly marked, was maintained when the Militia was again converted into a recruiting depôt for the Line. Inasmuch, however, as the vast majority of Militiamen were substitutes, I greatly doubt this ; and I conceive the Peninsular Army to have been little different from any other British army that existed between 1660 and 1870 ; having really good men sufficient to make an admirable body of non-commissioned officers, and scoundrels enough to lower very greatly the character of the whole. Wellington was no doubt hard upon them when, in his sweeping way, he described them as the scum of the earth ; and yet there was more than one occasion when the epithet was justified. Drink no doubt accounted in great measure for the readiness with which, at moments of extreme depression or triumph, the better men followed the example of the worst, as it explained also the failure—which seems in general to have been unquestionable—of promoted sergeants to become good officers.

But setting the character of the men aside, I conceive that many of the outrages which disgraced Wellington's army were not a little due to reaction against a discipline which, though in some ways excessively rigid, was in others curiously lax. Apart from the difficulty, already narrated, in the rules which hampered courts-martial, much depended upon the quality of officers commanding regiments and battalions. There were some colonels who hardly ever used the lash, while there were others who were always inflicting it upon the most trivial occasion ; and it

1803–1814. was natural that soldiers, who lived in daily dread of a flogging for any slight offence, should break out into mischief the moment that they discovered a momentary relaxation of the strong grip in which they were habitually held down. Meanwhile, even the best and humanest commanding officers agreed that it was impossible altogether to dispense with the lash for the maintenance of discipline. Many disliked the punishment because it was unequal. The wielders of the cat differed greatly in strength and skill ; and the culprits, as was natural, varied so much in constitution and sensibility that, while one man would break down under a given number of lashes, another would bear the same number with outward equanimity. Picketing, the sister punishment of flogging in the cavalry, was officially abolished in 1806, but was nevertheless continued in the Fifteenth Hussars, as Mr. Whitbread complained in Parliament, until after 1810. The whole subject of flogging was brought up in the House of Commons by Sir Francis Burdett in 1811 and 1812, when cases of undoubted hardship and even cruelty were adduced in favour of its abolition ; but the intent of Sir Francis was so obviously factious that he was always defeated by large majorities. The House of Commons is the worst possible tribunal to pass judgment upon such a question, especially when the Opposition is embittered and demoralised by long exclusion from office ; and few Oppositions have touched a lower depth of degradation than that which strove against Perceval and Liverpool.

Nevertheless, something was done, though not by the State, to appeal to the higher feelings of the soldier through the institution in various regiments of medals for good and distinguished service. These, let the fact be emphasised, were a purely regimental affair, and due to the sympathy of regimental officers, who are always the soldier's best friends. The idea seems to have originated with the Fifth Fusiliers, in which regiment there was established in 1767 an order of

merit in three classes for men who had displayed exemplary conduct for periods of seven, fourteen, and twenty-one years respectively. In 1785, at the suggestion of King George the Third, a similar order was introduced into the Twenty-second, which was then on guard at Windsor Castle. The Seventh Fusiliers followed the example of the Twenty-second in 1788; and in 1801 William Stewart carried the principle further in the Rifle Brigade by giving medals not only for good conduct but for acts of valour in the field. Several such orders were instituted between 1815 and 1850, but only one more (so far as I can gather) before 1815, namely, in the Seventy-fourth, where the qualification for the first, second, and third classes was service in not fewer than eight, six, or four general actions respectively. It became, however, a frequent practice for regimental officers to give a medal to individuals for distinguished service during the Peninsular War. The first example of the kind known to me is a medal granted to a private of the Fortieth for gallantry at Germantown in 1777; and the next belongs to the First Guards in 1809. In 1811 the officers of the Buffs gave a medal to Lieutenant Latham for saving the colours at Albuera; and the Thirty-fifth granted another to a sergeant who captured a French drum-major's staff at Arroyo dos Molinos. Several more instances might be quoted, among them that of the Fifty-third, which in 1815 distributed fifteen medals to as many sergeants, who had been prominent in different actions of the Peninsular War. Seeing that no general medal was granted for the services of the Army and Navy in the Great War until Queen Victoria's time, it is interesting to note how the omission was made good by the regimental officers. Nor can there be any question that such a decoration, conferred by comrades, was of peculiar honour and distinction.[1] 1803–1814.

[1] Mr. Oman (*Wellington's Army*, p. 251) says that there were "Peninsula period good conduct medals for the 10th and 11th Hussars

1803–1814. As regards drill and tactics, there is little new to be said, for there was no change in the exercise introduced by the Duke of York when he first took over the command-in-chief at the Horse Guards. The cavalry continued, as for years past, to manœuvre by threes, half-troops, troops, and squadrons, and, to judge from the action at Sahagun, was generally superior in field-movements to the French. The establishment of a regiment in the field was three squadrons made up of two troops apiece. In the matter of reconnaissance and outpost-duties the cavalry of the German Legion was decidedly superior to the British, though there were some British regiments, notably the Sixteenth Light Dragoons, which can have been little inferior to them. In the matter of care for their horses, also, the Germans surpassed the British as decidedly as the British surpassed the French. The conversion of some of the Light Dragoons into Hussars caused a certain alteration in the equipment, the Hussars discarding the old-fashioned carbine and bayonet in favour of a shorter and lighter weapon without bayonet. In both cases the carbine was fixed by an elaborate arrangement of straps on the offside of the saddle, where it wore out the thigh of the breeches or overalls and made mounting a difficult business.[1] Beyond a few superficial changes

(starting 1812), 5th, 7th, 22nd, 38th, 52nd, 71st, 74th, 88th, 95th, 97th, and some other corps." The regimental histories of the 10th and 11th Hussars are silent on the subject. The good conduct medals of the 5th, 7th and 22nd, as I have shown, belong to the 18th century. As to the 38th I can discover nothing. There is no record of the institution of good conduct medals in the regimental history of the 52nd, though there is a case of a regimental medal given to a private who was in the storming party at Badajoz : and the like is true of the 71st. The regimental order of merit in the 74th was instituted in 1814; that of the 88th in 1818; of the 95th in 1801; of the 42nd and 79th in 1819; and that of the 26th in 1823. Some information on the subject may be gathered from Fleming's *Catalogue of Medals*, 1871.

[1] This equipment for the carbine was still issued to the Yeomanry until about 1880.

of dress and saddlery Hussars and Light Dragoons remained practically the same, though possibly the Hussars may have outdone their fellows in the absolutely useless practice of firing from the saddle. It is very rarely that we find the cavalry dismounted to use their fire-arms. The sword was the same for both Hussars and Light Dragoons, being the unwieldy and ill-guarded weapon described in the account of the combats of cavalry during Moore's retreat to Coruña. The sword of the Heavy Cavalry was long, straight and heavy, better adapted for thrusting than for cutting. As the tendency of all Teutonic nations is to use a sword as if it were a bludgeon, it was probably ill-suited to British dragoons.[1] 1803–1814.

Of the leaders of the British cavalry contemporary opinion seems to have rated Lord Uxbridge as the best, and Cotton not far behind him. Of the brigadiers the name of hardly one has survived, or deserved to survive. The Germans Bock and Arentschild were probably the best, and next after them William Ponsonby, Le Marchant and Vivian. But Wellington seems to have taken longer to free the cavalry than the infantry from bad commanders ; and it is possible that the man whom he valued above all others in the mounted branch was the simple captain, Somers Cocks.

With regard to the dress of the cavalry, the Heavy Dragoons until the close of 1812 wore the long-skirted coat, jack-boots to the knee, and cocked hat which had come down with little variation from the time of George the Second. These garments were then replaced by a shorter skirted coat, which gave no protection to the knee, a brass helmet with a crest and plume, grey cloth overalls with a broad red stripe, and half-boots. The Light Dragoons likewise kept, until

[1] A highly distinguished cavalry officer told me that in Palestine in 1918 the British cavalry in the heat of pursuit forgot the legitimate use of their rapier-like swords, and used them as bludgeons, much to the advantage of the Turks.

1803–1814. 1813, the short laced jacket, leather breeches, long boots, and fur-crested helmet, which had been given to them when they were first dressed in blue, shortly after the American War. But in 1813 the laced jacket was replaced by one with a broad *plastron* of the colour of the facings, and the rest of the clothes by grey overalls with a stripe down the seam, half-boots, and a shako broadening out from the brim to the crown, in the front of which was inserted a plume. This head-dress, borrowed from the French, was probably the fancy of the Prince Regent, who suffered acutely from sartorial mania; and it was condemned by Wellington for the sound reason that it tended to confound the French troops with our own. The Hussars alone preserved the laced jacket, white leather breeches and Hessian boots. In fact the Peninsular War marks the period when overalls (so called because they were buttoned over all other clothing on the leg) and half-boots began to displace breeches and Hessian or top-boots among civilians as well as among soldiers. In an age when the saddle was the most usual means of travelling for men, the innovation was a foolish one, for only leather can resist the constant splashing of mud and water from the knee to the ankle, which is inevitable when riding on wet roads. Booted overalls, though already introduced into the French army,[1] had not yet reached the British.

The infantry continued to be governed, so far as exercise was concerned, by the drill-book of David Dundas; but the formation in triple rank was wholly abandoned in the field, though here and there it may have continued at home for purposes of parade.[2] Of the deadliness of the infantry's fire a score of fields have given emphatic proof; but it is worth while to recall

[1] I gather this from a drawing by Denis Dighton in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle, representing Suchet and his staff a few days before the battle of Castalla.

[2] I have seen a print of Volunteers drawn up in triple rank during the period under review.

that the calibre of the British musket was of sixteen bullets, whereas that of the French was of twenty bullets, to the pound. It is quite possible that the superior weight of the projectile was not without its effect in the duel of volleys. It is noteworthy that Wellington discontinued the former habit of massing grenadier-companies and light-companies together, and thus depriving battalions of their best men. Burgoyne did indeed complain that the grenadiers ought to have been selected for such work as the storm of Burgos;[1] but there can be no doubt that Wellington did away with what was, in its essence, a most pernicious practice. 1803–1814.

In the matter of dress the Peninsular infantry differed much from their predecessors, in that they never wore breeches and gaiters, which were abolished, just before the first campaign began, in favour of blue-grey trousers, and half-boots in lieu of shoes. Cocked hats endured for all ranks until 1812, when a tall felt shako, doubled along the front, took its place. The coat, which was heavily plastered across the front with white braid, had no skirt except at the back, where it took the senseless form of the tails that are still attached to men's evening dress. The cross-belt and pouches remained unaltered, a heavy oppression to the soldier's chest, while a stiff black leather stock encumbered his throat. Many a man owed his break-down, or even his death, to the belt and stock. Among officers the fashion was to wear the tails of the coat extravagantly long, even to the heels, and the cocked hat, which had earlier been worn rather high and with the points right and left, absurdly low and with the points fore and aft. Their appearance was consequently very ridiculous,[2] and the costume must have been singularly ill-suited to a campaign. Wellington himself always wore a blue frock and a more reasonable cocked hat,

[1] *Life of Burgoyne*, i. 234.

[2] There is a plate of this hat and coat in *Johnny Newcome in the Peninsula*.

1803–1814. pantaloons, generally white, and Hessian boots; though he occasionally cantered round his cantonments in plain clothes. He cared little, however, what his officers wore; and some of them clad themselves according to the latest fashion that reigned at St. James's, heedless of the tropical rains of Portugal, with very unpleasant consequences. It is difficult, during a campaign at a distance from England, to insist too strongly upon rigid adherence to the clothing laid down by regulation, for a man must often wear whatever he can in default of better; but I find it hard to believe that this laxity as regards dress and appearance had no bad effect upon discipline.

I now pass to the Office of Ordnance and to the corps affiliated to it. It will be remembered that the condition of the Office had been unsatisfactory at the close of the eighteenth century, and that this had reacted upon the Artillery with evil results. The department was managed, under the Master-general, by five members, called the principal officers of the Ordnance, namely, the Lieutenant-general, the Surveyor-general, the Clerk of the Ordnance—who was financial chief—the Principal Store-keeper, and the Clerk of Deliveries; the Master-general being supreme over all. Each of the four junior members had a separate department, and it should seem that there was some friction among them, and that the tendency of each was to treat his own business as a separate matter; for the Commissioners of Military Enquiry recommended that they should no longer stand apart, but should be amalgamated into a General Board of Ordnance. One great difficulty was that the Mastership-general was a political appointment and constantly changing hands, which was an absurd arrangement in so highly technical an office. Lord Chatham appears to have been one of the most successful of the Masters-general, being, for all his indolence, an extremely able man; and Lord Mulgrave, who was responsible for the department throughout the greater part of the Peninsular War,

was also a practical and capable soldier. But the Office, to judge by Wellington's complaints, was inert and incapable of leaving the groove which it had worn for itself;[1] and there was more than once unwarrantable delay in the despatch of ordnance-stores, while considerable folly was displayed in the provision of them.[2] It must be remarked also that though Wellington complained that his cannon were outranged by Napoleon's favourite twelve-pounders, no effort was made to supply him with a gun that would have enabled him to meet the French on equal terms. 1803–1814.

The field-artillery, to use a modern term, was still nominally organised in battalions and companies, but on the field this organisation disappeared and gave place to batteries or, as they were called, to brigades, some of which were distributed among the divisions as divisional artillery, and the remainder lumped together as a reserve. A serious complication was the separation of the artillery-drivers from the Royal Regiment proper. In 1806 the drivers were reorganised into ten troops and one "riding troop," with a total strength of over six thousand of all ranks. Each troop numbered five officers, five hundred non-commissioned officers and drivers, forty farriers and artificers, two rough-riders, and five trumpeters. The captains, called "Captains Commissaries," were taken from every corps in the army, and the subalterns were mostly deserving staff-sergeants of the Artillery itself; but there were no rules of promotion, the will of the Master-general—a political official, be it remembered—being absolute. This was one evil; but a greater and more obvious defect was that, directly a

[1] See, for instance, *Wellington Desp.*, to Bathurst, 27th Jan. 1813.

[2] So Dickson wrote from New Orleans: "With respect to our ammunition and stores, great quantities of articles have been sent that are perfectly unnecessary and never have been demanded, whereas others greatly required have never been sent although demanded in the most urgent manner." Duncan, *Hist. of the Royal Artillery*, ii. 403-404.

1803–1814. party of drivers was told off to its guns, their officers passed under the authority of the officers of artillery, and remained with no duties but those of paymasters. This was both wasteful and bad for discipline ; and the Commissioners of Military Enquiry rightly recommended that the drivers should form an integral part of the Royal Regiment, and that none but subaltern officers should be appointed to them. The drivers, however, were not abolished as a separate corps until 1822.

The quarrel between the Artillery and Wellington, begun by his unceremonious treatment of his senior officers in the Peninsula, continued by his taking away the horses from batteries and giving them to the pontoon-train, embittered by his harshness to Norman Ramsay, and made irreconcilable by his despatch after Waterloo, renders it difficult to speak of the relations between the two. There can be no doubt that no love was lost between the General and his gunners, but I find it difficult to believe that all the faults were on one side. Beyond question the primary cause of the whole affair was that the artillery did not owe allegiance to the same master as the rest of the army, which caused its officers, perhaps unconsciously, to assume in their hearts that they were after all not dependent upon him. Their attitude expressed itself rather through a habit of mind than through any outward and palpable manifestation ; but it is easy to understand that a Commander-in-Chief, and particularly an imperious man such as Wellington, must have chafed a good deal over the reflection that a most important branch of his army was not quite under his control. Determined to be master, he trampled right and left upon all the gunners' prejudices ; and, when the senior officers raised difficulties, he set them aside one after another until he found the man that he wanted, Captain Alexander Dickson, whom he raised without more ado—in effect if not in title—to the highest place. As regards the unhorsing of guns for the benefit of the

pontoon-train, no one can fail to sympathise with a battery-commander who sees the teams, which were his pride, turned over to another branch of the service, there to be ill-treated and wasted by ignorance and neglect. But gunners exist for war and not war for gunners ; a pontoon-train was more necessary even than cannon ; and it is not likely that Wellington would have weakened himself in artillery if he could have helped it. The case of Norman Ramsay, again, was a hard one, but no harder than that of several other officers in the army ; and even the crowning grievance, which we have not yet reached, of the Artillery at Waterloo, was not more crying than other regiments might with equal justice put forward against Wellington. The simple truth is that the Royal Regiment served the Duke well, as did the other regiments of the army, and was in the highest degree efficient ; and, if he in his turn sometimes grew impatient with it, he at least never lost one of their guns. 1803–1814.

The Engineers, as the past narrative shows, were crippled throughout the greater part of the war by the want of trained men ; and the conversion of the Royal Military Artificers into Royal Sappers and Miners in 1812 came too late to be of real service. Organised nominally into three battalions, the corps worked always by companies, three of which complete, together with detachments of two more, did duty at San Sebastian, numbering rather over three hundred men in all. One company of them contained the first men produced by Pasley's school at Chatham, and the first of their corps that ever wore the red coat. The officers of the Engineers proper seem to have been the most hard-worked and the worst paid in the army. The very subalterns were expected to keep their horse and mule, and could find plenty of work for them ; but the price even of second-rate animals in the Peninsula was such that these unfortunate officers could not equip themselves without overdrawing their pay and allowances for six months. Moreover, being constantly sent away

1803–1814. on missions of various kinds by themselves, they could maintain no mess, and, having no regimental sutler, were forced to buy all victuals at a ruinous rate. Impoverished by these expenses, they could not afford to keep a decent servant, and suffered further loss of their baggage and horses from the neglect and dishonesty of such Spanish or Portuguese lads as they could induce to accept a pittance of wages. In fact, to use the language of their own petition for relief, they existed only "by living in a state of misery and in a manner much inferior to that of any other branch of the Army, by dressing ill, riding horses incapable of doing their duty with alacrity, and consequently frequently leading to an appearance of lack of zeal, and notwithstanding all this extreme economy being almost universally in debt." In such circumstances it is hardly surprising that the junior ranks of the corps sometimes seemed a little slack in the performance of their duty. But they were never backward at a siege, and, in common with their brother officers, suffered terribly. At Ciudad Rodrigo seven Engineer officers out of nineteen were killed and wounded; at Badajoz thirteen out of twenty-four, of whom four had joined the army the day before the assault; at Burgos three out of five, as well as every one of their eight military artificers; and at San Sebastian eleven out of eighteen. Their industry and devotion has never received the recognition which it deserves.

The senior officers have been laden with no small share of blame for the heavy loss of life incurred at nearly all of Wellington's sieges. This has been attributed to their want of skill; and Wellington himself was not always complimentary to his chief engineer, Sir Richard Fletcher. Moreover, it is certain that bad and even unpardonable mistakes were made by some among them, as will have been gathered from my narrative of the sieges. There was no sharper critic of these blunders, whether the work of the Engineers or of the Commander-in-Chief, than

John Burgoyne, and he was particularly plain-spoken when he dealt with the failure at Burgos, for which Wellington in his public despatch acknowledged that neither the Artillery nor the Engineers were responsible. After the death of Sir Richard Fletcher before San Sebastian Wellington desired to make Burgoyne his chief engineer, and endeavoured to do so by the simple method of ordering Burgoyne's senior officers to remain at the base. This expedient, though successful in the case of Dickson with the Artillery, was neutralised in Burgoyne's case by a protest from Colonel Elphinstone, who was accordingly called to the front, only to incur Wellington's unqualified displeasure for not bringing forward sufficient pontoons for the bridge over the Garonne. However, there was at any rate in the Engineers one officer of really brilliant ability, and more than one subaltern — notably Wellington's favourites, Lieutenants Reid and Wright —who were of most uncommon promise. 1803–1814.

Altogether the Peninsular Army, though weak in numbers, was a very remarkable engine of war, thanks to its unbounded confidence in its great chief, and was still improving when its labours came to an end. Yet it cannot be said that Wellington was an ideal leader, for he commanded no such adoration from his men as had Marlborough. To speak plainly, he was not a lovable character. He was, in fact, never loved in his life by man or woman ; and one has a suspicion that, after all, a military career was not that which he thought to be really best suited to him. As a boy he was shy and sheepish, with indifferent health, and with an hereditary liking for music, which he cultivated for a time on the violin ; and his hands were the hands of an artist, long, taper and delicate. Of his early regimental days and his first active service in Flanders in 1794 we know nothing ; and it seems that he rarely referred to them. It was not until he went to India, where the hot climate appears to have done him extraordinary physical benefit, that he suddenly blossomed out into

1803–1814. a great soldier and a great administrator. There the transcendent common sense, which he so much admired in Marlborough, asserted itself instantly, carrying with it that penetrating insight into the heart of things, which is called genius. In planning his campaigns he displayed remarkable prevision, energy and industry in providing against all possible contingencies. In action he was sagacious to see an opportunity and swift to seize it, audacious in taking risks, calm and unmoved at the most critical moments, and possessed of that rare physical courage without which no general has ever risen to supreme height, but which in his case, as in Napoleon's, has never been sufficiently recognised. His Indian campaigns alone, unchequered by failure except before Seringapatam, together with his administrative achievements in India, would at any other time in the nineteenth century have won for him a peerage; but he returned home no more than a Knight of the Bath, with a fortune of £40,000 which had accrued to him from the prize-money of Seringapatam, and from the various appointments, civil and military, which he had held in the Dekhan. This last, fairly and justly earned, made no small difference to the heretofore penniless younger son.

Upon reaching England he was consulted by Ministers concerning expeditions, happily never undertaken, to the Orinoco, entered Parliament and became Chief Secretary for Ireland, which post he was actually holding when he went first to Copenhagen and afterwards to Spain. He permitted himself no illusions as to the state of Ireland, but carried on the government according to the approved fashion, giving occasional vent to his contempt for jobbers and place-hunters in a few sentences of that acrid sarcasm of which he was a master. For his chief, the Duke of Richmond, as also for a former Lord-Lieutenant, Lord Buckingham, to whom he had been aide-de-camp as a youth, he retained to the end a regard which was almost affectionate; for Wellington never forgot one who had

befriended him. Then came the expedition to Portugal, the victory of Vimeiro, fortune's last effort to injure him in the matter of the Convention of Cintra, and at length the command-in-chief in the Peninsula. At the outset he was a little over-elated by his success in driving back Soult from the Douro, and was inclined to believe that he could succeed where Moore had failed; but the campaign of Talavera taught him his lesson, and then the transcendent common sense asserted itself, and revealed to him the secret of a warfare which must slowly and steadily sap the strength of Napoleon. The entire population of Spain was hostile to the French; no part of the country could be called theirs unless held down by French bayonets. The French line of communications was long and incessantly harassed; and they depended entirely on the country not only for subsistence but for the pay of their troops. To the British the sea was open to bring reinforcements, supplies and stores to the port of Lisbon, which was his base. If that base could be rendered absolutely secure, then the advance of a compact body of fifty thousand men must compel at least that number of French to be concentrated to meet him; and the Spanish territory thus denuded of troops would pass into the hands of the insurgents, at best to remain in them permanently, at worst to require time and bloodshed for reconquest. 1803–1814.

There lay the germ of the whole of the Peninsular campaigns until 1813; but there was much to be done before it could grow to maturity. A Portuguese army must be created and paid; a Portuguese Government must be evolved out of anarchy; fortified lines must be thrown up to defend Lisbon; and, above all, a British army must be trained, organised, and perfectly equipped with transport—all in the face of an unstable Government at home, of a chaos of jobbery and inefficiency in Portugal, of a frightful dearth of specie all over the world, and consequently

1803–1814. of an exchange of twenty-five per cent at Lisbon against remittances from London. Such was the gigantic task which Wellington set to himself at the close of 1809 and brought to a triumphant issue in 1813, when he bade adieu to Portugal after to all intent governing it for more than three years. He had to teach every one of his subordinates his business; and this he did, not with the peremptory brevity which appears in his despatches, but with infinite pains, industry and patience. With him, as with Marlborough, it was patience in action that conquered all things, while impatience showed itself only in writing. He was indefatigable and he was ubiquitous. It appears that he was not fond of early rising; but he made up for lost time by galloping long distances at headlong speed on thoroughbred horses. Incapable of distinguishing sweet butter from rancid or fresh wine from sour, he was always abstemious and therefore always in good condition, ready for work himself and, more important still, to extort work from others. He had a curious team to drive, for the Portuguese were stubborn and recalcitrant; some of his departmental chiefs were sluggish and unwilling; and many of his officers were sulky and headstrong, inclined to jib or to kick over the traces. But he forced them to pull together, rating very freely and not sparing the whip upon occasion, but relying above all upon patient resolution and the electrifying touch of a strong hand upon the reins.

His second campaign, that of 1810, showed him that he had solved the main problem aright. When Massena was abruptly checked before Torres Vedras, it was only a question of time before the French should be driven from the Peninsula. Living on the country, they could not stay long in one place; whereas the British, carrying their victuals with them, could go where they pleased and stay where they pleased. The greater the district that the French might eat up, the greater would be the desert closed

to them but open to their enemies. So their advance and the British retreat would be shorter at every campaign, while difficulties of supply would compel the dispersion of the French into wider cantonments, and make their concentration more lengthy and more arduous. Then would come the time for snatching away the fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, as starting-points for a fresh spring eastward, which should end ultimately only at the Pyrenees. 1803–1814.

Only a great military genius could have perceived these possibilities, and only a great administrative genius could have turned them to reality. Yet throughout we are sensible that some of Wellington's greatest obstacles were of his own making and arose out of his own prejudices, and that he could have exerted even greater force with less friction had he been less of a driver and more of a leader. He was a St. Vincent and not a Nelson ; a chief, distant, Olympian and severe, not one of a band of brothers. True sympathy is rarely to be traced in his letters, though it is not wholly wanting ; the tone, though occasionally facetious, is seldom genial ; and the humour, though unmistakably present, is generally bitter. I attribute this not to insensibility—for there were a few recorded occasions when he broke down completely—but to stern and perhaps exaggerated self-repression. Wellington was not without vanity of a certain description, as witness his entry into Madrid ; not without frailty, for he was but a man ; and not without even a certain conceit, for he was supremely well satisfied with his own opinions and his own possessions. But as we see him through the medium of his own voluminous writings and the records of his contemporaries, he seems to me always somewhat artificial, despite of the rugged genuineness of character which distinguished him at great crises. Children in his later years, possibly also his daughter-in-law and one or two more women, knew the softer and more natural side of him ; but he could be stern even to them. He held

1803–1814. himself aloof from his officers and never commanded the confidence of all of his divisional generals. Their conceit may no doubt account for much; but one cannot imagine three of Marlborough's generals holding such a conference as that of Dalhousie, Clinton and Stewart on the retreat from Burgos. Yet, for all his contempt towards his juniors, it is an indubitable fact that Wellington shrank, even to a fault, from ridding himself of bad generals, and visited their blunders upon innocent subordinates with a harshness which drove some few of them to suicide. So likewise he would turn the demerits of a few into a sweeping condemnation of all; and would never revoke, nor even modify, a word of censure once uttered. In wrath he was something more than formidable; and the slightest deviation from his orders, even for obvious improvement, called his anger forth in all its terrors. McGrigor once incurred his displeasure in this way and could not pacify him; yet, when McGrigor was later on accidentally injured, Wellington, knowing his value, offered him, unasked, every possible comfort and attention. He was not ungenerous, and gave warm praise on occasion. He could tell Hill after St. Pierre that the day was all Sir Rowland's own; he could acquit his scientific advisers of responsibility for the failure before Burgos; he could boast that it was his distinction among generals to command an army which would extricate him from any "scrape" in which he might involve himself. Yet he deliberately alienated any affectionate feeling of all ranks from him; and, when the war was over, he parted from his soldiers without regret, and never troubled himself about them again. He was in fact glad to be quit of them, and made no pretence to the contrary.

This being so, his ascendancy over the army appears only the more extraordinary; showing forth, in spite of all defects, the extreme greatness of the man. Ambitious though he was, and fond of power,

Wellington was above all things a patriot ; and the key to the whole of his career is patriotic duty. He was far prouder of being an English gentleman than of all his honours and titles ; he believed in the England that produced such gentlemen, and was resolved to save her and them. He took over his army as an instrument to that end, just as an engineer might take over a gang of labourers to dig a canal, having no love for the gang in itself, but determined to make the best of it as a matter of duty. Being a consummate master of his art, one of the first strategists and decidedly the first director of a battle of his time, no doubt Wellington derived some pleasure and satisfaction from his campaigns, as must every great artist from his own work ; but, when his purpose was fulfilled, he threw the instrument aside without compunction, having no further use for it and little or no sentiment about it. As fate willed, he was destined to take it into his hand once again, but he could not divine the future. The able French historian of Wellington's campaigns in France concludes his narrative with the words, "Wellington ended the Spanish war as negotiator of a treaty of commerce." To an officer of so great an army as that of France such a termination seems ludicrous if not ignoble. To Wellington it was nothing but one more duty to be done for his country and, as such, quite as well worth doing as fighting a campaign. Through him this sense of duty penetrated into his army and carried them triumphant through the greatest period of British military history. He offered them no reward, for he did not speak to them of glory ; he made no effort—it would have been better if he had made it—to secure their personal attachment. He required of them inflexibly their duty to the utmost, and set the example himself. It was a hard school and he was a hard master, and to none more severe than to himself. He is remembered as one of three great English generals, sharing that 1803–1814.

1803–1814. honour with Cromwell and Marlborough. His true title to fame is that he was the most industrious, the most patriotic, the most faithful, and the most single-hearted public servant that has ever toiled for the British nation.

CHAPTER XXII

NAPOLEON, by sentence of the European Powers, was conveyed to the island of Elba on the 28th of April 1814; and on the 30th of May were signed the Treaties of Paris, which settled for the time, so far as France was concerned, the ambitions and animosities which had arisen out of a quarter of a century of war. Other weighty matters were adjourned until a Congress of the European Powers should meet at Vienna; but meanwhile France received a slight accession to the territory which she had enjoyed in 1791, and Belgium was united to Holland under the sovereignty of the House of Orange. England for her part retained Malta, Tobago, St. Lucia and Mauritius, and acquired further the conquered colonies of the Cape, Curaçoa and Demerara from the Dutch by purchase. In these circumstances, and until hostilities with America should cease, it was impossible to make very large reductions in the British army. Wellington's battalions were most of them sent away across the Atlantic as fast as they were released from France. The remains of Graham's detachment, with which he had stormed Bergen-op-Zoom, were marched from Holland into Belgium,[1] where they were joined in the course of the summer and autumn by the greater part of the King's German Legion,[2] and by fifteen

1814.

[1] 2/1st Guards; 2nd Coldstream Guards; 2nd Scots Guards; 2/25th; 2/30th; 33rd; 2/35th; 2/37th; 2/44th; 2/52nd; 54th; 2/69th; 2/73rd; 2/78th; 2/81st; det. 95th.

[2] That is to say, by all the cavalry, all the Light battalions, five out of seven Line battalions, both horse-batteries, one and a half foot-

1814. thousand Hanoverian Militia. These troops, which in August 1814 were placed under the command of the Prince of Orange, were stationed in the Netherlands under an agreement with Austria, Russia and Prussia, to maintain the provisions of the Treaty of Paris pending the final settlement of Europe by the Congress at Vienna.

The condition of Ireland was anything but peaceful, and it was therefore impossible to disembody the Yeomanry or even the whole of the Regular Militia ;[1] though the Local Militia, under the wording of the Act by which it was created, was disbanded within six weeks of the signature of peace. The only direction in which economy was possible was in respect of the cavalry, the veteran battalions, and the second battalions. In the mounted branch the Household regiments were greatly diminished, and the regiments of the Line were reduced to an establishment of eight troops of sixty men apiece ; and in the infantry before the end of the year eleven veteran battalions, twenty-four second battalions, and ten thousand foreign corps were disbanded. The Artillery was dealt with more summarily, for no fewer than seven thousand men were discharged. Altogether by the close of 1814 forty-seven thousand men had been struck off the strength of the British establishment.[2]

It was not to be supposed that the Opposition in Parliament would quietly acquiesce in the maintenance of so large a military force. Their gloomy forebodings of the past seven years had been steadily falsified ; and, now that Napoleon had been dethroned and peace was at last come, they seized the opportunity offered by Castlereagh's absence at Vienna to offer factious

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batteries. There was, however, a good deal of desertion from the Legion. *Wellington Supp. Desp.* ix. 394.

[1] In October there were about 10,000 Militia in Ireland and 6000 in England. *Wellington Supp. Desp.* ix. 368.

[2] Hansard's *Parl. Debates*, xxxi. 587 *seq.* *Wellington Supp. Desp.* x. 8.

opposition to every measure of the Government. They 1814.
cavilled at the appointment of the Prince of Orange to command British troops as "unconstitutional." They maintained that it was "unconstitutional" also to disembody a part of the Militia and not to disembody the whole. So useful are meaningless epithets to those who speak for the sake of opposing, and oppose for the sake of speaking. Lord Grenville, who ought to have known better, declared that there was no occasion for a larger peace-establishment than in 1792. He, at least, might have guessed, if not that the Powers who were rearranging the map of Europe at Vienna were on the point of flying at each other's throats over the destiny of Poland, Tuscany and Naples, at any rate that the weight of England's influence must depend not a little upon her military strength. Able but sentimental gentlemen waxed tearful over the disappointment inflicted upon Genoa by Castlereagh, when he repudiated Lord William Bentinck's foolish and unauthorised promises of a new Government after the model beloved of the Whigs.

The Corn Laws and the Income Tax furnished more legitimate subjects of criticism; and, when the Treaty of Ghent brought the American War to an end on Christmas Eve 1814, Liverpool was dismayed at the countenance which the Opposition received from his own supporters, and entreated Castlereagh to return home with all haste. "You might as well expect me to have run away from Leipzig (if I had been there) last year to fight Creevy and Whitbread, as to withdraw from hence until the existing contest is brought to a point," answered Castlereagh with high contempt; and indeed it was intolerable that the ablest of living English statesmen should be withdrawn from the post of greatest difficulty to listen to an ignoble adventurer and a vain, though amiable, chatterbox. There was, however, another Englishman at hand to replace him. Wellington, since the conclusion of peace created a Duke, had already been entrusted with diplomatic

1815. business in Madrid and in Paris. On the 3rd of February 1815 he relieved Castlereagh at Vienna; and by the first week in March the Foreign Secretary was again in his place on the green benches. Great was Liverpool's relief. "The country at this moment is peace-mad," he wrote on the 20th of February. "Many of our best friends think of nothing but the reduction of taxes and low establishments; and it is very doubtful if we could involve the country in a war at this moment for objects which, on every principle of sound policy, ought to lead to it."[1]

The object which, at Castlereagh's request, Liverpool was at the moment contemplating was the expulsion of Murat from the throne of Naples; the vicinity of Elba to that kingdom being a circumstance which kept King Lewis the Eighteenth and equally Wellington in constant apprehension.[2] The King, indeed, made the state of Italy his excuse for not paying to Napoleon a farthing of the £80,000 which the Allies had pledged him to allow to the fallen Emperor; and in less than a week after the date of Liverpool's letter, on the night of Sunday the 26th of February, Napoleon embarked by stealth at Porto Ferrajo, with the four hundred men which he retained as his guard, and landed at the Golfe de Jouan on the 1st of March. Moving first upon Antibes he found his overtures repelled by the garrison; but at Grenoble he was received by the troops with wild enthusiasm, and marched thence with fourteen thousand men upon Paris. Ney, who had set forth to capture his old master, found himself deserted by his best troops and embraced his side; and on the 20th of March Napoleon entered Paris amid wild shouts of joy from discharged soldiers and from officers who were starving on their half-pay. King Lewis, abandoned by the army, whose work this revolution really was, fled first to Lille and, as his prospects grew worse, was

[1] *Wellington Supp. Desp.* ix. 551, 573.
[2] *Ibid.* ix. 503.

for passing over to England, but was persuaded to establish his shadow of a court at Ghent. The Duke of Angoulême, who had collected some kind of a force about Nîmes, with the object of marching on Lyons and saving at any rate the southern provinces for the monarchy, gained a trifling success on the 2nd of April, but was surrounded and compelled to capitulate six days later. On the 16th of April he embarked at Cette for Spain, and all royalist resistance to Napoleon in this quarter came to an end. 1815. April.

The Bourbons have been much blamed for their folly during the first period of their restoration, from May 1814 till March 1815, and undoubtedly they were guilty of grave mistakes. But their difficulties, from the exhausted state of the country, were stupendous; and an archangel from Heaven could not have restored even the beginning of content to France, after all her misfortunes, within a period of ten months. Yet the only true supporters of Napoleon's short second empire were the men who had been discharged in rags and the officers who had been retired on a pittance, in order to cover the reconstituted Household troops of France with gorgeous uniforms.

The news no sooner reached Vienna than the assembled plenipotentiaries drew up a public declaration that Napoleon Bonaparte had placed himself outside the pale of public law, and must be delivered to public justice as a common enemy and disturber of the peace. To this declaration Wellington, as was natural, set his hand, and was rewarded by being denounced by Whitbread in the House of Commons as one who abetted an openly expressed intention to assassinate Bonaparte; an infamous accusation which might have been excused by Whitbread's ignorance of the French language, but for which, in his portentous vanity, he had not the grace to apologise. In every capital of Europe the alarm was great; but it was speedily resolved that the plague should be abated at any cost. On the 25th of March it was agreed

1815. March. between Great Britain, Russia, Prussia and Austria that, pursuant to the Treaty of Chaumont, each of these Powers should place one hundred and fifty thousand men in the field, and not lay down their arms until Bonaparte should have been rendered helpless for war. In the case of Great Britain it was arranged that she should be at liberty to substitute money for men at a fixed rate. Having signed this instrument and a further convention to grant a subsidy of five millions sterling to the contracting parties, Wellington left Vienna on the 29th of March and, travelling at great speed, reached Brussels on the night of the 4th of April. The Prince of Orange had taken alarm from the first. "Bonaparte will, I am persuaded, enter Paris very shortly," he had written on the 17th of March. "He will then move down without delay upon this frontier." Accordingly, he had ordered the fortresses of Western Flanders and Mons to be repaired at once, so as to secure them against a stroke of surprise, and had despatched a messenger to ask for help from General Kleist, then commanding an army of rather over forty thousand Prussians and Saxons, which were stationed about Aix-la-Chapelle. The arrival of Wellington in the Netherlands was an intense relief to Ministers, for the Prince of Orange, with rather absurd conceit, declared that he would not willingly have yielded up his charge to any other man. He was, in fact, burning to invade France and to fight Napoleon single-handed; and, even after receiving from Bathurst strict orders to do nothing so foolish, he had maintained his dispositions for an advance. Young and ambitious of military glory, he was still unaware, though he was shortly to prove, that he was unfit even to command a battalion.[1]

The information that greeted the Duke upon his arrival at Brussels was not of the most cheering. Ten days before quitting Vienna he had urged the re-

[1] *Wellington Supp. Desp.* ix. 593-594, 599, 600, 617-619, 703; x. 5. Le Bas, i. 175-179.

inforcement of the army in the Netherlands to the utmost ; and the answer that awaited him set forth the following facts. The entire strength of British troops which Ministers could immediately place at his disposal did not exceed six regiments of cavalry and twenty-five battalions of infantry. Of these twenty-five no fewer than fifteen were the "weak corps and inefficient battalions" which had been hastily scraped together for the sudden emergency which called Graham to Holland, and which contained on an average fewer than five hundred men apiece. The three battalions of Guards were superior to the rest in strength, but even they contained four hundred men too young and weak for service in the field. Of the ten new battalions promised to him, the third battalion of the Fourteenth had not been in existence two years, and at the outset had been rejected for active work, the Inspector-general remarking that he had never seen such a lot of boys, both officers and men. The second battalion of the Fifty-ninth were likewise unfit for any but garrison duties, being young, half-trained and weak in numbers. Of the remainder the first battalions of the Fifty-second, Seventy-first, and Ninety-first were embarked and sailing for America, but had been recalled and directed to Ostend ; while those of the Twenty-third, Fifty-first and Ninety-fifth were in garrison on the south coast of England. One and all of these six had served for long in the Peninsula, though the last three had lost many of their veteran soldiers owing to the expiration of their term of service ; and it must be added that the first battalion of the Fifty-second, by absorbing the remnants of its second battalion, did not add to the number of units, though it added much to the strength and quality, of the troops at the front. The utmost that Ministers could hope to send, beyond this handful of men, was a brigade of heavy cavalry and four battalions of infantry from Ireland, with which the authorities at Dublin Castle were extremely reluctant to

1815. April.

1815. April. part, and a battalion of Guards, together with a few squadrons of Household Cavalry as soon as certain riots, which had arisen in London over the subject of the Corn Laws, should have subsided. It was necessary to provide for the safety of Malta, Messina and Corfu, which would strain the British resources in the Mediterranean to the utmost ; and in the West Indies battalions would be required to look after Martinique and Guadeloupe. In fact, until the return of troops from America and Canada nothing more could be done towards the making of a British force in the Netherlands.[1]

Highly indignant that the British army should be so poorly represented at so critical a time, Wellington complained bitterly that the Government might liberate the soldiers in Ireland at once by calling out the Militia. But Ministers were unfortunately hampered by technical difficulties, all of which turned upon the question, bluntly propounded by Whitbread in the Commons, "Are we at peace or at war ?" At war with France England certainly was not and had no wish to be ; but, on the other hand, she had pledged herself in concert with the Powers of Europe to suppress Napoleon Bonaparte, who had just arrogated to himself supreme authority in France and was supported by the whole of her military forces. Now the Crown had no right to call out the Militia except in time of actual war or insurrection. As it happened, there were still seventeen thousand British Militia, complete battalions of respectable strength, embodied under the emergency of the last war which had been terminated by the first Peace of Paris ; and there would have been more but for the factious clamour of the Opposition for their immediate disbandment. But of the disembodied residue so many men, both principals and substitutes, had taken their discharge on the completion of their term of service, that not above twenty thousand were left, and those were dispersed among a

[1] *Wellington Supp. Desp.* xi. 6, 19-22.

number of weak battalions. If those twenty thousand were summoned by reason of a new war, then all the men of the seventeen thousand, whose period of service was bounded by the close of the last war, might reasonably claim their discharge. All that would be gained therefore by the calling out of the Militia would be the substitution of fifty or sixty weak battalions, counting in all twenty thousand men, for five and twenty or thirty respectable bodies numbering only three thousand less. Ministers judged the seventeen thousand to be more valuable than the twenty thousand, and beyond doubt they were right. 1815. April.

Moreover, the expediency of a ballot was, in the circumstances, very doubtful. The country was full of discharged soldiers whom it was most desirable to regain for the regular army; but there was every probability that, in the event of a ballot, they would engage themselves as substitutes in the Militia, with the hope of receiving later a large bounty to transfer themselves later to the Line. The whole situation was strangely complicated, so much so that the Cabinet took seven full weeks, dating from Napoleon's entry into Paris, to come to a decision concerning it. At last, on the 9th of May, they brought forward a Bill to permit the Local Militia to volunteer for duties in garrison, so as to release the old Militia for more important functions. A fortnight later a second Bill was introduced to draw out and embody the Old Militia itself, the preamble stating that "there was an immediate prospect of war with France"; and it was arranged that the vacancies should be filled by beat of drum, and that a moderate bounty should be offered to old soldiers who would rejoin the regiments of the Line. These two Bills quickly became law on the 14th of June, the day before Napoleon crossed the Sambre, and four days before the battle of Waterloo.[1]

[1] Hansard, xxxi. 223, 265, 653. Statutes 55, Geo. III. caps. 76, 77. *Wellington Supp. Desp.* x. 66, 83, 183. *Desp.*, to Bathurst, 6th Apr. 1815.

1815. April. It is difficult to understand why Ministers should have waited so long before setting all doubts as to the Militia Laws at rest by means of the simple preamble quoted above ; and the whole of this episode brings into glaring relief the evils of our party system and the defects of our organisation, even after nearly a quarter of a century of war, for National Defence. The eulogists of Napoleon in Parliament had no real wish to see him again become a menace to Europe, still less to give him a chance of invading England ; nor did they even desire their country to lose weight in the councils of Europe at the Congress of Vienna. Yet they deliberately laid themselves out to fulfil the whole of these purposes, simply because by so doing they might embarrass the Government. French authors continue to quote their speeches as evidence that there was a Napoleonic party in the British Parliament. There was nothing of the kind ; but there was a certain number of gentlemen who, finding his name a useful counter in the game of party, did not hesitate to degrade it by turning it to that contemptible use. They deceived themselves—at least it is charitable to believe so—they deceived him, and they caused considerable anxiety to our General in the field ; thus accomplishing what is probably the greatest degree of mischief that is possible to small talkers in their relation to great men.

As to the vacillation of the Government in regard to the Militia, it must be remarked that the issue raised by Whitbread—whether England were at war or peace — was a real one which troubled even Wellington at the front long after the words were spoken in Parliament. " In the situation in which we are placed at present," he wrote to the Prince of Orange on the 11th of May, " neither at war or at peace, unable on that account to patrol up to the enemy and ascertain his position by view or to act offensively upon any part of his line, it is difficult if not impossible to combine our operations because there

are no data upon which to found a combination." 1815.
Yet the British Navy had begun to take French prizes April.
in the Channel and on the Atlantic seaboard before the end of March. The Prince of Orange had arrested French prisoners who were on their way to France from Russia; and the Continental Powers had cut off all regular communications between France and the world without. All of these were hostile acts, and it is therefore difficult to understand why Ministers should have boggled at the wording of the Militia Statutes. But be it observed that, if our system of National Defence had been based upon the compulsory personal service of every man of military age, the difficulty arising from the wholesale discharge of substitutes would not have arisen. It would have been sufficient to call out the Militia, and the ranks would automatically have been full of trained men. No system of National Defence is sound which recognises, as the British system had always recognised, the principle of substitution.

To return to Wellington's army, cavalry, from the nature of the American War, was more easily provided than infantry; and the Horse Guards had made no difficulty about the immediate despatch of six regiments of Light Horse which had served in the Peninsula. But the whole of them were weak and could send abroad only three squadrons apiece, of fewer than one hundred and fifty of all ranks to the squadron. The Artillery was in a still more woeful plight. There was plenty of guns and ammunition; but, since seven thousand of the Royal Regiment had been discharged since the Peace of Paris, the Master-general could provide neither men nor horses. Considering the difficulty of training gunners and drivers, this immediate and sweeping reduction of the Artillery, before the Congress of Vienna had concluded its labours, was reckless in the extreme; but there the fact was. Wellington asked for one hundred and fifty cannon, and the Master-general was unprepared to

1815. April. supply immediately more than forty-two. Nor could he hope to furnish drivers, except by enlisting post-boys for short periods, so as to make use of those who were out of place, and by offering four guineas bounty to such Hanoverians as might condescend to accept it.[1]

Over and above the British troops, and almost to be considered as a part of them, was the King's German Legion, some corps of which had been halted in the Netherlands while on their way to Hanover for disbandment. They comprised five strong regiments of cavalry, eight weak battalions of foot, and three and a half batteries of artillery with thirty guns, of which four corps of the horse, five of the foot, and three of the artillery had served under Wellington in the Peninsula. Supplementary to the Legion were the Hanoverian Militia, consisting of one battery, two regiments of cavalry, and twenty-five battalions of infantry. These were all of them young half-trained troops, and greatly deficient in officers. As the regiments of the Legion were in want of men, Wellington proposed that they might be filled up, as in England, by volunteers from the Militia ; but, this suggestion being rejected by the Hanoverian Government, he had no alternative but to reduce the battalions of the Legion from ten companies to six, and to transfer the supernumerary officers and non-commissioned officers from the Legion to the Militia. This was a false policy, for it is easier to make good infantry by mixing young soldiers with twice their number of veterans, than by keeping the young soldiers together and adding only an infusion of old officers and sergeants ; but the Hanoverians decreed that this mistake should be deliberately made, and made it was.[2]

As regards the Staff, Wellington complained bitterly that he was flooded with officers who were all of them useless. " I might have expected," he wrote, " that

[1] *Wellington Supp. Desp.* x. 18, 183.

[2] *Wellington Desp.*, to the Prince Regent, 17th April 1815. Beamish, ii. 323 *n.*

the Generals and Staff formed by me in the last war would have been allowed to come to me again, but instead of that I am overloaded with people I have never seen before ; and it appears to be purposely intended to keep those out of my way whom I wished to have." As the Duke repeated statements to this effect at intervals to the end of his life, it will be well to examine the matter more closely. It must be premised that the Anglo-Hanoverian force which he took over from the Prince of Orange was an organised army with its staff complete ; and it will be admitted that, while it is easy to give a general a free hand in nominating his staff when every place is vacant, it is difficult, without hardship, to do so when many places are already filled up by officers who have held their posts for many months. Nevertheless the Duke of York, through Sir Henry Torrens, desired Wellington, immediately after his arrival in the Low Countries, to favour him with his wishes respecting all appointments; and Torrens himself not only wrote at once to recall Sir George Murray, who had sailed to Canada to take the place of Prevost, but privately begged the Field-marshal not to hesitate, on the score of friendship, to displace a relative of his own, an old Peninsular officer, from the Quarter-master-general's department. To make things still easier, Torrens repaired to the Netherlands himself to facilitate the arrangement of these and kindred matters. 1815. April.

The Quarter-master-general to the Prince of Orange was Sir Hudson Lowe, an officer of great ability, deep professional knowledge, and very wide experience, having been present at thirteen general actions in which Napoleon in person was commanding the French. Torrens speedily discovered that Lowe "would not do for the Duke" ; and it was arranged that Sir Hudson should take his departure immediately upon Murray's return, and that Colonel de Lancey should be summoned to resume his old place as Deputy Quarter-master-general. De Lancey demurred to the

1815. April. "indignity" of returning to a situation which he had so long held in the Peninsula, but presently set out for Brussels; and the removal of Lowe to a command in the Mediterranean at the end of May left De Lancey in the post, which he had desired, of Chief Staff Officer. The Adjutant-general was Sir Edward Barnes, one of Wellington's brigadiers in 1813 and 1814 and an excellent man for the place. The head of the Artillery was Colonel George Wood; the head of the Engineers Sir James Carmichael Smyth, who had worked out the plans for the very able attack on Bergen-op-Zoom; and the Commissary-general was Mr. Dunmore, who had been specially sent for from the Peninsular Army by Graham.

The divisional commanders were George Cooke, who had for some time been in charge of Cadiz and had served throughout Graham's campaign in Holland, Vandeleur, Charles Alten, and Hinüber, all of whom Wellington had known well in the Peninsula, and Victor Alten, of whom Wellington had rid himself. The brigadiers were Peregrine Maitland, who had already served with the Duke in the Pyrenees; Lyon, who had commanded a battalion in Portugal until 1812 and since then a division of Hanoverians at Göhrde; Kenneth Mackenzie, a pupil of Charles Stuart and of John Moore, who had distinguished himself in various campaigns; Frederick Adam, whose fortunes, unluckily for him, had been linked to John Murray and William Bentinck; Colin Halkett, Ompteda, Arentschild, Bussche, Dörnberg, and Du Plat, all of the German Legion, of whom the first four were veterans of the Peninsula and the last two alone bore unfamiliar names. In the case of Adam, the Duke of York represented that he was an intelligent and distinguished officer to whom a brigade had been long promised, and that, as he chanced to be in the Netherlands, he had been placed upon the staff of the army there. Yet another brigadier, Johnstone, was in command of the brigade which was on the point

of starting for America when it was recalled and sent to Flanders ; and it was reasonably thought unjust that he should be removed solely on account of the change of destination. So far, therefore, it does not appear that Wellington had any just grievance against the original composition of the staff of the army in the Netherlands ; and it may be added that the first new names added to the list by the Duke of York were those of Hill, Colville, Clinton, and Vivian. 1815. April-May.

Passing next to the junior members of the Prince of Orange's staff, two out of five in the Adjutant-general's department had served on the staff of the Peninsular Army with distinction from beginning to end ; a third, after brilliant work as a regimental officer, had joined the staff in 1813 ; a fourth had commanded a battalion under Graham, and the fifth had been a staff-officer in the West Indies. In the Quarter-master-general's department, one of the four deputies had served in that same department from the first to the last of the Peninsular War, two more had passed through the war partly as regimental and partly as staff-officers, and the fourth, having been attached to Lord Cathcart while that nobleman was Commissioner with the Russian armies in 1813 and 1814, could claim at least a considerable experience of work in the field. As the whole of these gentlemen retained their places, there seems to have been no great objection to them. When Wellington took over the army, eighteen new officers were added to the Adjutant-general's department and twenty-four to the Quarter-master-general's. Among the former are to be found the familiar names of Elley and Waters ; and, so far as I can ascertain, nearly all of the remainder had seen service in the Peninsula, more than one of them on the staff. There is only one whose appointment suggests itself to me decidedly as a job. Among the latter are to be found Felton, Hervey, Jeremiah Dickson, Lord Greenock, Gomm and four more who had done the like work in the Peninsula and were men

1815. April-May. of tried capacity; and of the residue some certainly, and many probably, had learned at least their regimental duty in Spain and Portugal.

For the rest, the Duke of York was ready and indeed eager to send out Edward Paget, Dalhousie, Picton and Cole. Kempt, Pack, Byng, and William Ponsonby were on their way to the Low Countries. Alexander Dickson was sent out specially to do any work with the artillery that Wellington might choose to assign to him. Colquhoun Grant was spared to take charge of the department of intelligence; and McGrigor, though about to take up the duty of Director-general of Hospitals, offered to come over to head-quarters and organise the medical service. In fact, of Wellington's most trusted subordinates only Murray and Burgoyne were absent, both of them in America. Altogether, although there was undoubtedly some friction in the matter of appointments to the staff, and there may have been more young gentlemen than work could be found for, it seems to me that, except in the matter of reducing its numbers, Wellington had his own way and had no right to complain that his staff was without experience. The secret of all his ill temper seems to have been that many of his former staff-captains and majors had, by exchange into the Guards, obtained the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and were on that account at first rejected by the Duke of York, though subsequently permitted to take up their appointments. Wellington's sweeping statements therefore, on this as on some other topics, should not be accepted without much reservation.[1]

It remains to consider the Allied armies with which Wellington was expected to act, both within his own command and without it. Of the Dutch troops

[1] *Wellington Supp. Desp.* x. 1-6, 9-11, 24, 43, 78-79, 84, 130, 219; Despatches to Torrens, 21st, 28th April, 5th May; to Maj.-Gen. Darling, 2nd May; to Lord Stewart, 8th May; to Dr. Renny, 22nd May, 1815. *Life of Sir William Gomm*, p. 348.

the reports sent to him were contradictory. In general their spirit was said to be good; but many of the officers of all grades, as well as some of the men, had been in the service of France, and were suspected to be, not unnaturally, in sympathy with her. The bond of military comradeship is strong; and the French faction in Holland, notwithstanding its defeat by the bold diplomacy of Sir James Harris in 1787, had by no means been wholly extinguished. At the head of the Ministry of War was General Janssens, who, having fought unsuccessfully against the British both at the Cape and in Java, would hardly have been human if he had felt kindly towards them; and the officers of almost every department under him were known to be at heart partisans of the revolution and of France. The exception among them was the Quarter-master-general, Major-general Constant de Rebecque, a loyal, able, and energetic officer, who had accompanied the Prince of Orange throughout the campaigns in the Peninsula. The army itself was in course of re-organisation; the Dutch fortresses were in bad order; and there was a scarcity of muskets. 1815. April-May.

The Belgian troops were represented, unequivocally and not inaccurately, to be bad and untrustworthy. The creation of the army for the service of the King of the Netherlands had only begun in February 1814, and had been greatly hampered by want of funds, clothing and arms, with the inevitable consequence of much desertion. The officers were said to be friendly to the French, but the general attitude of the privates, and indeed of the whole population, was that of sulky indifference. In 1814, when the Belgians had received a promise of independence, they had rejoiced over their deliverance from the yoke of Napoleon. But when they found their country annexed to Holland, by no will of their own but for the convenience of the mightier powers, they were filled with disgust towards European politics, and regarded with impartial hatred all the contending

1815. April-May. nations which were preparing once again to turn their fair and unhappy land into an arena for the settlement of their differences. There was no lack of brave men of all ranks among them ; they had proved their courage when fighting under the standards of Napoleon; but they had no enthusiasm for the new cause for which they found themselves impressed, and they saw in it nothing worth the spending of their blood. An impartial observer is bound to admit that they were amply justified. Since the Belgians were of this stamp and the Dutch troops were mostly militia, it was very doubtful whether they would be of great military value, whatever their appearance. Wellington after inspecting them pronounced on them the following judgment. The Nassauers (it will be remembered that a battalion of them had deserted to the British in France) were excellent ; the Dutch Militia were a very good body of men, though young ; the Belgians were young and, some of them, very small, but well clothed and equipped and, apparently, well disciplined ; the cavalry were well mounted but indifferent riders. In his heart, however, the Duke expected little of them, and he would gladly have imported ten thousand of the Portugese who had fought, generally, well for him in the Peninsula ; but his effort to obtain them met with no success.[1]

Altogether the Duke was within the bounds of moderation when he described his army as infamous. Nevertheless, though his British troops were for the most part far inferior to any that he had seen in the field since 1794, they, together with the King's German Legion, were his most trustworthy soldiers ; and he considered it imperative so to mingle them

[1] *Wellington Supp. Desp.* x. 15-17, 167 ; and see Le Bas, *La Campagne de 1815*, i. 34, 35 ; and James, *Campaign of 1815*, pp. 18, 19. I am afraid that not all the pleading of Le Bas and his collaborator can satisfy me that the Dutch and Belgians were good troops and ready to fight the French. It would be contrary to human nature if they had been ; and it is no reproach to them, or at any rate to the Belgians, that they were not.

with the rest as to impart some measure of stability to the whole. In this, however, as in every design which he framed for the organisation and disposition of his forces, he was at the outset thwarted by the King of the Netherlands. This Prince was the son of the Stadtholder who had taken refuge in England in 1795 and had died there in 1806. Unlike his father, he lacked neither intelligence nor good intentions, and was by no means without experience of military operations in the field. His new position as Sovereign of the Netherlands made, as the British Cabinet recognised, the choice of advisers and administrators very difficult; for he was confronted with the alternatives of employing men of ability and weight but of doubtful loyalty, owing to their former connections, or men of unimpeachable principles but lacking both knowledge and authority. Some of the most important of those whom he actually selected were viewed by Wellington with profound distrust; and to their influence he ascribed the steady opposition of the King to all measures which he recommended. It is likely enough that the Duke was right; for the story of British statesmen from 1688 to 1714 and of Napoleon's marshals in 1814 and 1815 shows that, where there are rival dynasties, men generally seek to be on good terms with both. On the other hand, it must be admitted that some of the British demands were calculated to wound the susceptibilities and excite the suspicion of good Netherlanders, most notably that which required Ostend and Antwerp, the keys of the British communications, to be entrusted to British commanders. Still, the Dutch had no one but themselves to thank if the Cabinet in Downing Street was wary in dealing with them. No people could have shown a more wretched spirit in 1793, 1799 and 1814, when the red-coats had landed to help and hearten them to the reconquest of their independence; and too much blood and treasure had already been sacrificed in reliance upon that "rising of the Dutch" which

1815. April-May.

1815. April-May. was always promised and never fulfilled. The Hollanders professed to mourn over the freedom of which Napoleon had bereft them ; but it was when they thought of their lost commerce that they wailed loudly and from their hearts.

Each party therefore watched carefully for foul dealing in the other ; and Wellington, who with all his faults was at least a straightforward man, read treachery in every obstacle raised by the King against his wishes. Perhaps the Duke hardly made allowance for the exaltation which kingship might produce upon a potentate who, up to the past twelvemonth, had possessed neither territory nor subjects. A sense of the ridiculous is not too common in royal families. The Prince of Orange had with difficulty been restrained from invading France in order to measure his military genius against Napoleon's ; and his father may well have thought that a crown adds an augmentation to the brain as well as an adornment to the brow. However that may be, the contention between the King and the Duke became so hot that Wellington on the 4th of May shook the dust off his feet and sent a message to the effect that, unless His Majesty mended his ways, the British Commander would have nothing more to do with him. On the same day the King made over to him with no ill grace the command of the whole of his troops, with the rank of Field-marshal in the service of the Netherlands.[1]

This difficulty surmounted, the Duke distributed his army into three corps. The First, commanded by the Prince of Orange, consisted of the First and Third British Divisions under Cooke and Charles Alten, the 2nd and 3rd Netherlands Divisions under Generals Perponcher and Chassé, and a Dutch Division of Cavalry under General Collaert. The Second, under Lord Hill (as we must now call him), was made up of the Second and Fourth British Divisions under Clinton and Colville, the 1st Netherlandish Division

[1] *Wellington Supp. Desp.* x. 167, 218, 222.

under General Stedman, and a Netherlandish brigade under General Anthing, the whole of the Netherlanders being subject to Prince Frederick of Orange, aged eighteen. The Third Corps, or Reserve, was composed of the Fifth and Sixth British Divisions, which were ultimately commanded by Picton and Lambert (for Cole had married a wife and therefore could not come in time for the opening of the campaign), the Nassau contingent of three battalions, the cavalry-divisions of the British and of the King's German Legion (comprehending sixty-nine squadrons in seven brigades, with six batteries of horse-artillery), twelve squadrons of Hanoverian cavalry, and three brigades of Netherlandish cavalry with one battery of horse-artillery. To the Brunswick contingent of eight battalions, four squadrons and two batteries were in due time to be added, for the most part young and raw troops, but steady enough in the cause of the Allies. 1815. April-May.

But this list by no means exhausts the details of the intermingling. In every British Division except the First, foreigners were blended with red-coats. Alten's and Clinton's had each one brigade of British, one of the Legion, and one of Hanoverians ; Picton's and Colville's had each two brigades of British and one of Hanoverians ; Lambert's comprised one brigade of British and one of Hanoverians. Even so, however, the subtlety of mixture is not yet wholly expressed. In Cooke's division of Guards the three young battalions were stiffened by one old one from the Peninsula. In Alten's, where all the British were young, the battalions of the Legion were veterans and the Hanoverians were regulars ; in Colville's, where the British were both old and young, the Hanoverians were both regulars and militia ; in Clinton's, Picton's and Lambert's, where the British as well as the troops of the Legion were old, the Hanoverians were all militia. In like manner the Prince of Orange had been careful to mix up regular battalions with militia and Belgians with Dutch. Well might Wellington doubt the quality of

1815. April-May. his army and pronounce that its organisation, together with the choice of officers, was a matter of great difficulty.

By extreme good fortune the extension of Prussian territory to the extreme west had brought about the presence of some thirty thousand Prussian troops and fourteen thousand Saxons, under General Kleist, upon the Lower Rhine. This force was to be completed to five corps with a joint strength of a hundred and twenty thousand men, the whole to be commanded by Blücher, with Gneisenau for the chief of his staff. The number sounded imposing, but the quality of the troops left much to be desired. Nearly half of the infantry—sixty-six out of one hundred and thirty-six battalions—was composed of militia and, of these sixty-six, twenty-four were of new formation and included six from Westphalia, which had only since the Peace been placed under Prussian rule. Of the seventy battalions of the Line two were from the Duchy of Berg, the appanage of Murat under Napoleon, and had served in the French Army ; and there were among the rest eight thousand recruits levied in the newly acquired provinces between the Rhine and the Meuse. The clothing, equipment and armament of all were equally defective, there being in some regiments muskets of three different calibres, and no uniformity of belts or pouches. The cavalry was in worse condition even than the infantry. The regiments of the Line numbered twenty against fifteen of militia ; but, of the twenty, one half were of recent creation, and, of the fifteen, two had only just been scraped together. The artillery was well provided with guns but short of gunners—in fact in precisely the same state as the British. Blücher, the Commander-in-Chief, was a fine fighting soldier, full of activity in spite of his seventy-one years, rough and illiterate but staunch and shrewd, and not in the least afraid of Napoleon. Gneisenau, who was supposed to make good what Blücher lacked in brains, enjoyed a great

reputation as a scientific officer and a profound strategist, but did not shine in other capacities, being a timid commander and an indifferent tactician. Unaware of his defects, or at any rate unwilling to admit them, he conceived himself to be undervalued, and vented his spleen in querulousness, jealousy and suspicion ; and, though he hated the French, he did not love the English. His talents, however, when added to the peculiar qualities of Blücher, made a very powerful combination. 1815. April-May.

Let us now turn to Napoleon and take notice of the force that he could match against these two very poor armies of Wellington and Blücher. The France to which he returned was not the France which he had left behind him in 1814 ; and he presented himself to the nation not as Emperor, but as First Consul, the leader of a revolution which was to overthrow the evils restored by the Bourbons and deliver the people from the tyranny of priests and kings. The remnant of the old revolutionists was inclined to take him at his word and repeat the violence and outrage of 1793 ; but, once reinstalled at the Tuileries, Napoleon's innate loathing for the mob reasserted itself, and he began forthwith to resume the pomp and outward trappings of the Empire as if he were once more absolute. Here, however, he was checked. Moderate as well as extreme men exclaimed against a despotism and clamoured for a liberal constitution ; and, unless he were prepared to make himself a mere chief of revolutionary banditti, he was bound to give way. In truth his return was not very welcome except to his old companions in arms. The heads of the provincial administration, though half of them had been nominated by him and continued in their places by the Bourbons, showed no zeal in his cause. Their underlings were actively unfriendly ; and an attempt to get rid of them by a new election had no effect but to reinstate them with greater influence. The permanent civil service contained many adherents of

1815. April-May. King Lewis. The clergy were naturally irreconcilably hostile. In La Vendée there was from the end of April a renewal of insurrection. Everywhere it was realised that the Empire signified war, whereas the entire nation longed for peace. The funds, having fallen with a rush from 78 to 58 within less than a month, continued to sink slowly through May and June ; and no efforts of Napoleon could arrest them. He quickly produced a constitution, more liberal than that granted by the Bourbons, which bewildered many and pleased none ; and he appointed the 1st of June for its solemn ratification by the people.

Even in dealing with the troops he was cautious of exercising arbitrary power. The Army of Lewis the Eighteenth numbered slightly over two hundred thousand men, but Napoleon dared not double its strength by such measures as had been the rule under the Empire. There were something over one hundred thousand more men who were on leave or who had taken leave, or, in plain English, deserted ; and it was reckoned that sixty thousand of these could be recovered. The Emperor, however, delayed to call them to the colours until he had sent a circular to the powers of Europe making proposals for a peaceful settlement. This missive was returned unopened by the Prince Regent of England and rejected with as little ceremony by the rest. The summons was meanwhile issued, and seventy-five thousand men responded to the call. Voluntary enlistment produced fifteen thousand more, and the enrolment of the seamen at the national dockyards added yet another six thousand. At the end of June, moreover, Napoleon hardened his heart to conscribe the men due for service in 1815, some of whom had already served under him in 1814 ; and within a week nearly fifty thousand of them were assembled in the various departmental centres. Besides these there were at his disposal the National Guard, consisting of some two hundred thousand men between the ages of

twenty and sixty, and capable of expansion to more than ten times that number. Of these he ordered for the present the mobilisation of some two hundred and thirty thousand ; and, notwithstanding recalcitrance in some quarters, one hundred and fifty thousand were at their appointed stations, in fortress or in camp, by the second week of June. With them, five and twenty thousand veterans and sundry local corps sufficed for the guarding of strong places and frontier-roads. 1815. April-May.

Thus there was a fair prospect that half a million French would be more or less ready for the field by August ; but small arms and cartridges were scarce and, though there was abundance of cannon, carriages and ammunition were deficient. Moreover the magazines were empty, the clothing of the existing troops was in rags, and both cavalry and artillery were very short of horses. With his usual energy and resource the Emperor set himself to remedy these defects and to repair the fortifications ; and being ably seconded by Davoût, whom he had placed in charge of the Ministry of War, he achieved an astonishing measure of success. The order for mobilisation had hardly been issued before the indefatigable brain had sketched the organisation of the force, which was altered at the end of May into its final form—an Army of the North, one hundred and twenty-four thousand men, under Napoleon's own command ; an Army of the Rhine, twenty thousand men, under Rapp ; another of the Alps, twenty-four thousand men under Suchet, with subsidiary corps, amounting together to fourteen thousand men, in support ; and two corps of the Eastern and Western Pyrenees, fourteen thousand men, under Decaen and Clausel. The greater number of his generals rallied to him ; but a few stood aloof, and a few more, though willing, were rejected. Of the Marshals, Victor, Marmont and Berthier, who had followed Lewis to Belgium, were struck off the list, and Augereau with them. Oudinot, Gouvion St. Cyr, and Kellermann were left severely alone ;

1815. April-May. Masséna and Macdonald were pressed to accept commands but refused them. Berthier, who was at Bamberg when Napoleon left Elba, was anxious to return to France, but was denied a passport. On the 1st of June he fell, apparently by accident, from a window on the third floor of his house to the pavement below, and was picked up dead. Soult, therefore, was installed as Chief of the Staff, a position for which his great military talents, impaired as they were only by his irresolution on the battle-field, seemed particularly to qualify him. In the Army of the North, which was distributed into five corps, the generals of Spain were again prominent, the first corps being assigned to d'Erlon and the second to Reille. The three that remained were allotted to Vandamme, Gérard and Mouton, Count Lobau. Drouot took charge of the Imperial Guard and Grouchy of the cavalry.

There is still a name wanting from the list of Napoleon's greatest lieutenants, that of Joachim Murat, King of Naples. On the eve of his escape from Elba Napoleon had sent him a message, bidding him prepare for war, since, if the Austrians declared against the revival of the French Empire, the Neapolitan army would be required for an important diversion against them. At the outset Murat declared to the Ministers at Vienna that his policy should be subordinated to that of the Emperor Francis; but, fearing lest Napoleon might re-annex Italy, he prepared to conquer Italy for himself. On the 29th of March he moved his army from Ancona towards Bologna. Then crossing the line of demarcation between Austrian and Italian territory, he advanced to Rimini, and on the 30th published a proclamation calling all Italians to arms for the freedom and unity of their country. Advancing next to Bologna, from which the Austrians fell back before him, he on the 4th of April occupied Ferrara, Modena and Florence. There his progress was stayed. The Austrians, having gathered in force behind the Po, repelled all his efforts to cross the

river, and taking the offensive thrust him back to Ancona. The decisive battle was fought on the 2nd and 3rd of May, which left him a week later with only ten thousand of the forty thousand men with which he had begun the campaign. On the 19th he fled from Naples to Toulon, from whence he sent a letter to Napoleon asking for a command in his army. Napoleon, sufficiently vexed that his only ally in Europe should have spent his strength in a mad enterprise which could profit no one except his enemies, rejected the overture in harsh terms ; and therewith vanished all hope that Murat would take his old place at the head of the French cavalry. 1815. April-May.

Various plans of campaign were produced from the various capitals of the powers, but were finally reduced by Schwarzenberg to one. According to this, France was to be invaded by six armies simultaneously. On the extreme right, that is to say in the north, Wellington with ninety to a hundred thousand men was to advance between Maubeuge and Beaumont ; on the left of Wellington the Prussians under Blücher, rather under one hundred and twenty thousand men, were to penetrate between Philippeville and Givet ; on the left of Blücher one hundred and fifty thousand Russians under Barclay de Tolly were to enter by Sarrelouis and Saarbrück ; and on the left of de Tolly two hundred thousand Austrians and South Germans were to break in by Sarreguemines and Bâle ; and the whole of them were to converge by Péronne, Laon, Nancy and Langres upon Paris. On the extreme south fifty thousand Austrians and Piedmontese from Upper Italy, and twenty-five thousand more Austrians, who were opposed to Murat, were to cross the Alps and turn right and left upon Lyon and Provence. In their usual leisurely fashion the Austrians set down the opening of the campaign for the end of June or beginning of July, since they and the Russians could not count upon being complete and in readiness at an earlier date. Meanwhile, of course, the armies of

1815. April-May. Wellington and Blücher were to form the outposts of the entire host, so as to cover the general concentration on the eastern frontier of France.

Wellington, and for that matter Blücher also, were strongly opposed to delay and anxious to take the offensive as soon as possible, so as to check, or at any rate to embarrass, the re-establishment of Napoleon's authority by showing the French people the disastrous consequence of accepting it. Wellington also insisted particularly upon the importance of preventing Napoleon from gathering any headway outside the boundaries of France. The great Emperor's system was, so far as possible, to support his armies at the expense of his enemies, to make war, as Wellington put it, a pecuniary resource ; and the Duke had truly foretold in the Peninsula that, as soon as hostilities were transferred to the soil of France, the zeal of the French soldiers and inhabitants would very quickly languish. Again, a triumphal entry, bloodless or the reverse, into Belgium, would certainly rally the Belgians, and probably the Dutch also, to Napoleon ; and the moral effect in Europe would be very great. The new King of the Netherlands had just set up his capital at Brussels. The restored King of France had taken refuge at Ghent. If both of these potentates were forced to take to their heels because the Allies from want of energy or alleged military reasons were unable to protect them, the old legend of Napoleon's invincibility would be re-established and his partisans would show their heads all over Europe. In England, for instance—and this was what Wellington particularly dreaded—the existing Ministry might be driven from office with the full assent of their former supporters, now become " peace-mad," and would be replaced by such men as Grey, Whitbread and Tierney, hungry for office after twenty years of exclusion, strongly possessed by the false beliefs which they had been proclaiming for years, and practically committed to a reversal of the Government's policy, not because

it was wrong but because it was the Government's. 1815.
If England withdrew from the Coalition, all resistance to Napoleon was at an end, for without England's subsidies the remaining powers could not keep their armies in the field, and the Emperor might resume his sway in Europe as early as he pleased. It was in this light that the coming campaign presented itself to Wellington. Now, more even than in the worst days of the Peninsular War, the existing Ministry depended upon him whether it should stand or fall; and upon the maintenance of the Ministry depended the defeat of Napoleon. A short semblance of success on the part of the enemy might suffice to bring about the great disaster. It may seem almost incredible that a few factious utterances by a handful of mediocre men—utterances inspired rather by vanity, by the habit of contention and the excitement of rhetorical combat than by any sincere desire to do mischief—should cramp the movements and vitiate the dispositions of a great commander in the field; but undoubtedly they did so in 1815; and the consequences were likely to have been the more serious because the commander was, as he truly said, at the head of an infamous army.

CHAPTER XXIII

1815. April-May. As a matter of fact Napoleon could have invaded Belgium with every chance of success at the end of March. Kleist and the Prince of Orange could not have raised, between them, more than eighty thousand men, of which number twenty-four thousand Saxons and Netherlanders were not to be trusted, and the remainder were mostly half-trained troops. Against them Napoleon could have pitted fifty thousand seasoned soldiers, and, encountering such commanders, could hardly have failed of a great initial success. The Prince and Kleist were prepared for such a movement, but could not agree where to meet it. The Prince of Orange, in his anxiety to take the offensive, had disposed his troops upon a line running from Tournai through Ath and along the course of the Sambre to Namur, where was stationed the Prussian vanguard ; and he was anxious to give battle on the south side of Brussels. Kleist, on the other hand, fearing for his communications, held the maintenance of the line of the Meuse to be the most important object. As a matter of strategic principle Sir Hudson Lowe agreed with Kleist, but considered that strategic considerations were overruled by the political inexpediency of throwing the entire country south of Brussels, already not too well affected towards the new King of the Netherlands, into the arms of Napoleon. Kleist and the Prince accordingly compromised their difference by arranging that, in case of an attack, the Prince's own army should retire while Kleist's should

advance, and that their united forces should give battle at Tirlemont, about thirteen miles east of Brussels. 1815. April-May.

Wellington, as may be supposed, settled the question immediately after his arrival by advocating that the Prussian army and his own should unite at once south of Brussels, rather than allow the French to be in possession of the Belgian capital even for a moment. The question was no easy one of solution. The Prussian communications lay towards the east, the British towards the west, the Dutch towards the north. Which of them was to sacrifice its line of operations in case of mishap? Without immediately raising this issue, Gneisenau consented to move Prussian troops farther westward so that the most advanced of them should occupy Charleroi and the ground west of it so far as the Roman road from Binche to Bavai, but asked for further light upon Wellington's plans. The Duke in reply admitted that political considerations counted for much in the disposition which he advocated, and conceded further that to allow them too much weight, as compared with purely military exigencies, was as great a blunder as the converse. He then gave it as his opinion that, if Napoleon should advance, he would probably choose the line between the Scheldt and the Sambre, or in other words that he would strike at the British communications. In that case the Prussians at Charleroi would form the left of the line, the rest of the Prussians being concentrated at Namur. Battle would then be offered south of Brussels, and, in case of mishap, the entire army would retreat upon Liége and Maastricht or even, if necessary, still farther east to Juliers. This signified plainly that, if circumstances should demand it, the British and Dutch would abandon their communications and shift their line of operation eastward. Gneisenau, emphasising this point, declared that all difficulties were now at an end, and that he accepted Wellington's plan without hesitation. Wellington rejoined that only the

1815. April-May. peculiarity of the circumstances could warrant him in thus giving up his connection with the sea; but that any retreat of the Allies could at worst be but momentary—indeed they were already in too great strength to think of retreat or even of being attacked.[1]

This last opinion, written on the 13th of April, referred of course only to the situation of the moment and signified no more than that a raid from Napoleon with a small force, for the sake of rallying the Belgians to his standard, was now out of the question. On the other hand the collapse of the Duke of Angoulême's operations forbade an early offensive of the Allies such as Wellington had hoped to undertake in support of the royalists in France. The British Commander now turned his attention rather to the defence of the Low Countries, hastening the repair of the fortresses in West Flanders within the quadrilateral Ostend, Ypres, Mons, Antwerp, and offering to supply twelve thousand of the twenty-seven thousand men required for their garrisons from his British and Hanoverian infantry. On the 21st of April Blücher arrived at Liége, upon which point the Prussian army was rapidly assembling; and Wellington, bidding him welcome, sent Colonel Henry Hardinge as British attaché to the Prussian head-quarters.

Throughout this time an infinity of business was pressed upon Wellington. There were long letters as to the attitude of Spain, equally long letters as to the prospects of obtaining a contingent from Portugal, constant references to the business transacted, or untransacted, at Vienna, the soreness of Prussia at being restrained from swallowing up Saxony, the allotment of the German contingents to the armies of Blücher and of the Duke himself, the arrangements for the subsistence, upon Netherlandish territory, of the Prussian armies, which as usual were extremely arbitrary and rapacious, above all the distribution of

[1] *Wellington Desp.* To Gneisenau, 5th, 10th, 15th April; to Clancarty, 6th April 1815. *Supp. Desp.* x. 45, 69.

the subsidies to hungry and impecunious powers, whose representatives vied with each other in parading the sacrifices and poverty of their nations. Everything was thrown upon him ; and, as holder in some degree of the English purse-strings, he was treated by his German colleagues of all professions, Blücher perhaps excepted, with a kind of jealous servility. It was no easy course that was given him to steer ; and indeed his functions during this campaign, as in the Peninsula, were perhaps even more diplomatic than military. 1815. April-May.

In the matter of his relations with the Prussians there were two initial difficulties. First, the Prussian army was divided into rival parties, headed by Generals Knesebeck and Gneisenau ; and, since Knesebeck for his own ends favoured close joint action between the British and Prussians, it was natural that Gneisenau should cherish a contrary view. In the second place, Wellington's feelings towards France were widely different from the Prussian. Gneisenau not unnaturally, considering all that his adopted country had suffered at the hands of the French armies, was for making the war one of punishment for the French nation, and a means of "humbling their military spirit." Wellington wished only to get rid of Napoleon, and to spare the French as much as possible. It was thus that he had rendered the approach of the red-coats more welcome than that of Soult's soldiers to the inhabitants of Southern France. Some substitute for Napoleon must, however, be found, and Wellington agreed with Castlereagh in thinking that the restoration of Lewis the Eighteenth would be the most certain means of assuring the tranquillity of Europe for a short time. But all reports from France were so unfavourable to this solution, and the Tsar Alexander was known to be so adverse to it, that Wellington, while still working for it, thought success almost impossible of attainment.[1]

[1] *Wellington Supp. Desp.* x. 79, 138, 173.

1815. All through April British reinforcements continued
May. slowly to trickle over to Flanders, and at the end of the month Lord Uxbridge arrived to take command
May 1. of the cavalry. On the 1st of May there was an alarm of an attack, and Wellington issued alternative orders for a concentration of the British and Netherlandish armies to meet a French advance either between the Lys and the Scheldt or between the Scheldt and the Sambre. In the first case the inundations about Oudenarde and Ghent were to be let loose; and the British were to concentrate between the Scheldt and the Sambre in readiness to cross the former river, while the Netherlanders were to assemble at Soignies and Nivelles. In the second event both British and Netherlanders were to be gathered together at Enghien and Soignies. The intent was very evidently to cover Ghent and Brussels, the temporary home of King Lewis and the newly established capital of King
May 3. William. On the 3rd of May Wellington rode over to Tirlemont to meet Blücher, with whom he had a conversation which he described as very satisfactory, the purport of it being, apparently, that Blücher had promised to stand by him and not allow him to be overwhelmed by superior numbers. Since the armies of the two Marshals combined amounted to one hundred and fifty thousand men, and Napoleon's, by all reports, did not exceed one hundred and fifteen thousand, Wellington had hopes of "giving a good account even of Bonaparte."[1]

The alarm passed off, and the next incident was a mutiny of Blücher's fourteen thousand Saxon troops, which compelled their removal from the fighting line to the rear. This was no very great matter, for the loyalty of these Saxons had always been doubtful, and it was better that they should declare themselves at a safe moment than in the middle of active operations; but it is significant that the King of Saxony

[1] *Wellington Desp.* Memo. from the Prince of Orange, 1st May. To Prince of Orange and Hardenberg, 3rd May 1815.

entreated Wellington to take them under his command,[1] attributing their misconduct entirely to rude handling on the part of the Prussians, and engaging to answer for their fidelity if subjected to the Duke. In the course of the month the English battalions promised to Wellington commenced to cross the Channel in driblets, and he began to chafe at the delay in opening the campaign. He had fairly good intelligence of the strength of the enemy from Clarke, Napoleon's late Minister of War, who was now with Lewis the Eighteenth at Ghent ; and he was satisfied that the British and Prussians could not move until the main body of the Allies should come up ; but none the less he had an uneasy feeling that every day gained by Napoleon was to the advantage of the enemy. Intelligence from the frontier continued to be contradictory. On the 8th of May the Duke wrote that he and Blücher were so well united and so strong that he had little apprehension of an attack. On the 9th, upon the news of a French concentration at Valenciennes and Maubeuge, he was inclined to contract his cantonments a little. A few days later there were signs that the enemy contemplated a defensive rather than an offensive campaign ; but, in accordance with concerted arrangements, the Prussians drew a little closer to the British, and on the 11th of May Blücher fixed his head-quarters at Hannut, about twenty miles west of Liége. Still the prevailing impression both at the British and the Prussian head-quarters was that their armies were doomed to a tedious series of sieges of the French fortresses on the frontier ; and Gneisenau was inclined to think that the operations would require five hundred siege-cannon.[2] On the 22nd of May French patrols encountered the Prince of Orange's outposts, a little to the east and to the south of Mons, and fired the first shots of the campaign ; but the incident was of no importance. On the 21st Wellington announced that, though still without some of the

1815. May. May 8. May 9. May 11. May 22.

[1] *Supp. Desp.* x. 346, 348. [2] *Ibid.* x. 335.

1815. German contingents that had been promised to him,
May. he could, after making provision for all garrisons,
take the field with seventy-six thousand bayonets and
May 30. sabres ;[1] and on the 30th he wrote to Uxbridge that
there was a prospect of moving shortly.[2] Blücher was
impatient to open the campaign ; and it was hoped
that, upon the arrival of the Austrians on the Rhine
at about the middle of June, the entire force under the
Prince and Wellington would advance in earnest.[3]

June. In the first days of June there were again reports
of a French concentration at Maubeuge, and Welling-
ton on the 7th issued his final orders as to the defence
of the fortresses of Western Flanders.[4] French news-
papers, carefully falsified, announced that Napoleon
would leave Paris for Laon on the 6th. Another
report[5] said that he would go to Douai on the same
day, would make a false attack on the Prussians and
a real attack on the English, and destroy both before
the Russians came up. The air was full of rumours
and contradictions ; and Napoleon was reported to be
at half a dozen different places before he had ever left
June 10. Paris. On the 10th Clarke sent a final estimate of
the strength and distribution of the French force,
reckoning the troops at Napoleon's disposal in the
north very correctly at one hundred and twenty
June 11. thousand men. On the 11th a Colonel Dillon of the
British army arrived at Mons, and gave it as certain
intelligence that Napoleon had reached Avesnes. On
June 12. the 12th five deserters came into Mons from Landrecies
with information that Napoleon was just come to
Laon. Other intelligencers brought news that Reille's
corps had reached Maubeuge ; that a division of
the Imperial Guard was due to arrive at Avesnes,
to which place head-quarters would be transferred

[1] *Wellington Desp.* To Schwartzenberg, 21st May 1815.
[2] *Ibid.* To Uxbridge, 1st June 1815.
[3] *Ibid.* To H. Wellesley, 2nd June 1815.
[4] *Ibid.* To Prince of Orange, 7th June 1815. *Supp. Desp.* x. 412, 413.
[5] *Supp. Desp.* x. 424.

immediately, and that Soult had passed through Valenciennes and Maubeuge, *incognito*, also on his way to Avesnes.[1] On the 13th there were reports from more than one source of a French concentration at Maubeuge ; and on the 14th the troops at Maubeuge were stated to be moving eastward upon Beaumont. Early in the afternoon General Dörnberg wrote to head-quarters that, according to the latest accounts, there were one hundred thousand men between Maubeuge and Philippeville ; and Hardinge at ten o'clock of the same night announced that at the Prussian head-quarters a French attack was expected, and that some preliminary orders had been given tending towards the concentration of the Prussian army to meet it. Nevertheless the Allied armies both of Wellington and Blücher remained in their original cantonments, which, as shall now be shown, were of dangerous extension. 1815. June 13. June 14.

On the right or west of the line the head-quarters of Hill's, the Second Corps, were at Ath. Of his two British divisions, Colville's head-quarters were at Oudenarde ; the division being thrown back more or less *en potence*, with one of its Hanoverian brigades at Nieuport, Mitchell's brigade about Renaix, and Johnstone's between Courtrai and Oudenarde. Clinton's head-quarters were at Ath, where was stationed Du Plat's brigade of the German Legion ; the Fifty-second and a Hanoverian brigade being posted between the town and Lessines, with the remainder of Adam's brigade at Leuze. Next to these, east of Colville and north of Clinton, were Stedman's Netherlandish division, with head-quarters at Sotteghem, cantonments scattered between that village and Ghent, and Anthing's Dutch brigade still farther north at Alost.

The First Army Corps, under the Prince of Orange, had its head-quarters at Braine-le-Comte. Of Cooke's British division the Guards were at Enghien and Byng's brigade at the village of Marcq, practically touching

[1] *Supp. Desp.* x. 456.

1815. June 14. the Guards. The head-quarters of Alten's division were at Soignies ; Colin Halkett's brigade had been distributed south-westward of it as far as Lens, Kielmansegge's Hanoverians a little to south of Halkett, and Ompteda's north-westward towards Ath. Farther east, Chassé's Netherlandish division, with head-quarters at Roeulx, was disposed southward towards Binche, and Perponcher's, with head-quarters at Nivelles, reached as far south-eastward as Frasnes and Villers Perwin. The Reserve was assembled in and about Brussels.

The British and Hanoverian cavalry were distributed along the line of the Haine from Mons by Jemappes, St. Ghislain, Roucourt and Béclers to Tournai and Menin, with two regiments at Ghent, and a brigade between Ninove and Grammont, at which last place were Uxbridge's head-quarters. General Dörnberg, who commanded the 3rd Brigade, was stationed at Mons and charged with the collection of intelligence from the frontier. Eastward from Mons the Netherlandish cavalry watched the frontier as far as Binche, from which point, or rather from Bonne Esperance, a little farther south, they were relieved by the Prussians.

The Ist Prussian Corps, under Ziethen, had its head-quarters at Charleroi and extended from Fontaine l'Évêque on the west through Marchienne to Moustier on the east, its reserves of infantry being at Fleurus, of cavalry at Sombreffe, and of artillery at Gembloux. Its outposts ran from Bonne Esperance, south-eastward through Thuin and Gerpinnes to Sosoye, a total front of close on thirty miles.

On Ziethen's left the IInd Corps, under General von Pirch I.,[1] had its head-quarters and one brigade at Namur, another parallel to it on the Meuse at Huy, a third midway between them to the north at Heron, the fourth at Thorombais-les-Béguignes, eighteen miles

[1] There was a second General von Pirch in command of a brigade of Ziethen's corps, who is distinguished as Pirch II.

due north of Namur, the reserve infantry on the road between these two places, and the reserve artillery at Hannut. 1815. June 14.

The IIIrd Corps had its head-quarters and one brigade at Ciney, about fifteen miles south-east of Namur ; the reserve artillery lay on the road to Namur, with a second brigade of foot north-west of it at Assesse, and the reserve cavalry on the road to Dinant, where there was a third brigade of infantry. The fourth brigade of infantry lay at Huy.

Of the IVth Corps one brigade was with head-quarters at Liége; another a little to the north at Liers, with the reserve cavalry and artillery a short distance to north-east of it ; a third brigade lay five miles to west of Liége at Hollogne-aux-Pierres, and the fourth still farther to west at Waremme.

The shape of the line thus held from Ostend through Tournai and Mons to Liége was convex, and in its full extent about one hundred and fifty miles, of which, roughly speaking, one hundred miles were guarded by the hundred and five thousand men under Wellington and fifty by the hundred and twenty thousand men of Blücher. The head-quarters of the two chiefs, Brussels and Namur, were thirty-two miles apart by road. Taking Nivelles, immediately to north of Fontaine l'Évêque, as the point of junction between the two armies, the remotest of the Prussians at Liége and of the British at Oudenarde could not possibly have reached it in less than two days. This dispersion was explained by Wellington, so far as his army was concerned, by the imperative necessity for watching the four great roads that led from Lille, Condé, and Valenciennes upon Ghent and Brussels. It was on one or other of these lines, it must be repeated, that he looked for an attack, if any should be delivered. He had therefore arranged his dispositions to concentrate either to west or to south ; he had made fortified passages over the rivers ; and he had repaired the fortresses of Nieuport, Ostend, Ypres, Menin, Cour-

1815. June 14. trai, Oudenarde, Tournai, Ath and Mons, so as to place the weakest of them beyond reach of a stroke of surprise, and to make the strongest of them defy any onslaught less formidable than a regular siege. A hostile concentration at Maubeuge in itself by no means belied his prevision, for the enemy might advance from thence as readily upon Mons as upon Charleroi or any other point upon the Sambre. Assuming then that he had rightly divined his enemy's purpose, which the event showed that he had not, his arrangements were intelligible.

The like can hardly be said of the Prussians. The dissemination of their army was excused upon the ground that, if the cantonments were contracted, the victualling of the force became impossible. There was no doubt some truth in this ; though it seems that the difficulty was greatly of the Prussian's own making, for they deliberately imported dissension into the ranks of the Allies by endeavouring to take their subsistence by force from the Netherlanders instead of paying for it.[1] But in any case the disposition of the IIIrd Corps within the triangle between Namur, Huy and Dinant, facing west, seems to be absolutely meaningless as a defensive measure ; and, as Wellington pointed out, pending the arrival of the Austrians and Russians, the attitude of the Allied armies in the Low Countries was inevitably defensive. If any French offensive movement were apprehended from Philippeville, a small corps of cavalry would have sufficed to watch Dinant and the line of the Meuse southward from Namur. If again Gneisenau dreaded a blow at his communications, after the manner of Saxe and Carnot, the obvious precaution was to shift his line of operations from Liége and Namur to the great Roman road, which runs through Tongres to Maastricht, and to have moved the IIIrd and IVth Corps farther to

[1] This gave Wellington much trouble. See *Despatches*. To Clancarty, 14th May ; to Hardinge, 24th May 1815. *Supp. Desp.* x. 368, 380.

the north. But he, even as Wellington, thought his own army too strong to be attacked; and the arrangements of both were made rather for the coming invasion of France than for the defence of the Low Countries. 1815. June 14.

Still more curious were Gneisenau's orders and measures in case of an attack on the line of the Sambre. There were bridges at Lobbes, Thuin, Abbaye d'Aulne, Marchienne, Charleroi and Châtelet, all of which lay within the sphere of observation of Ziethen's corps. No attempt was made to prepare these for demolition; indeed the bare fact that they were of masonry was accepted in the Prussian army as warrant that they were indestructible. Further, orders were issued by Gneisenau that no gun was to be unlimbered on the bridges, and that their defence was to be limited to a powerful fire of skirmishers. At this rate it is difficult to understand why the Prussian General went through the form of stationing three brigades of infantry on the river at all ; for a few vedettes might perfectly well have watched the points of passage if there were no intention to defend them. But it is fairly evident that Gneisenau still cherished a predilection for the cordon-system which had ruined the Austrian campaign of the Low Countries in 1793 and 1794. However, Ziethen's instructions were, in case he were assailed in force, to abandon the whole of the ground that he had been watching from Bonne Esperance to Châtelet and to concentrate at Fleurus; which meant that he was to retire to a flank, leaving a gap of over fifteen miles in the Allied line from Binche to beyond Charleroi, and uncovering the direct road from Charleroi to Brussels by Quatre-Bras. One wonders whether this was part of the "satisfactory" arrangement agreed to between Blücher and Wellington. The Duke had freely offered, in case of a reverse, to abandon his line of communication with the sea and to retreat eastward; and upon this understanding Gneisenau had consented to bring his army forward

1815. and help Wellington to keep the enemy, if possible,
June 14. out of Belgium. But, if at the first serious thrust at its line of outposts the Prussian advanced corps were to shrink away to eastward and throw open the direct road to Brussels, then obviously Wellington must either conform to the movement, making a flank march across the front of the assailing army, or retire northward, if not westward, and be wholly separated from Blücher. The neglect of this important point seems to reflect no great credit upon the foresight of either commander.

Such was the situation when cumulative intelligence of the assembly of the French about Maubeuge, Beaumont and Philippeville caused Gneisenau at noon of the 14th to order Thielmann and Bülow to contract the cantonments of the Prussian IIIrd and IVth Corps. Further information received later in the day prompted him,[1] shortly before midnight, to send further and more definite instructions with a view to the concentration of the entire army. Thielmann was to leave small detachments to watch Dinant and the approaches to Givet, and bring the rest of his force to the left bank of the Meuse about Namur ; Pirch I. was to collect the IInd Corps between Namur and Fleurus at Mazy and Onoz ; and Bülow was politely requested to gather the IVth Corps about Hannut on the 15th and to fix his head-quarters there. But no hint was given to Bülow that this movement was to be part of a general concentration ; and not a word was sent to Wellington to inform him that such a concentration had even been thought of.

Meanwhile Napoleon had been laying his plans with his best skill. He had early resolved to take the offensive, and to assail the Allies in Flanders, hoping that, by beating Blücher's and Wellington's armies in turn, he would rally all Belgium to his standard, bring a peace-loving ministry into power at Downing Street, and be free to march with his

[1] Blücher was asleep, so Gneisenau took the duty upon himself

victorious army to the Vosges to throw back the Austrians and Prussians. It was open to him to strike at the Allies by their right flank, their left flank, or their centre. He rejected the first and second plans because, in addition to incidental objections, the turning of either flank would drive the British to unite with the Prussians, or the Prussians to unite with the British, whereas his purpose was to keep them apart and if possible to defeat them piecemeal. He considered that nothing less than a victory would drive the British Ministers from power, whereas Wellington, who was the better judge on such a point, conceived that the occupation of even half of Belgium would suffice; and therein lies the root of the difference of opinion between them, which reacted so powerfully upon the conduct of the campaign. Napoleon therefore decided to fall upon the armies of Blücher and Wellington at their point of junction with all possible secrecy and swiftness. 1815. June.

At the beginning of June the five corps of the Army of the North were posted about Lille, Valenciennes, Mezières, Thionville and Soissons, with the Imperial Guard at Paris, and the Reserve Cavalry between the Aisne and the Sambre. Screened by the fortresses on the frontier and by the belt of forest that extends from Thuin almost to Namur on the south of the Sambre, the concentration of these forces was to such a master of the art no difficult matter, and was rendered the easier by the unwillingness of the Allies to send even the smallest military bodies across the frontier. The Imperial Guard were the first to move, marching in detachments between the 5th and the 8th of June upon Avesnes by way of Soissons; Gérard with the 4th Corps was the next, leaving Metz on the 6th for Philippeville; d'Erlon quitted Lille on the 9th for Valenciennes, from which Reille moved out at his approach, and the two marched eastward upon Maubeuge. Vandamme shifted from Mezières to Philippeville, and the rest of the troops were directed June 5-8.

1815. to Beaumont. Napoleon himself left Paris early on
June 12. the 12th, breakfasted at Soissons, slept at Laon, and arrived at Avesnes on the 13th. By the night of the
June 14. 14th the whole were assembled on a line of about sixteen miles between Solre-sur-Sambre and Philippeville. The entire manœuvre was conducted with the strictest secrecy ; all communication with Belgium and the Rhine provinces was closed ; an embargo was laid on all ships even to the very fishing-boats ; and at every point from which regular troops had been withdrawn, National Guards were pushed up to take their place. Only one small detail went amiss. Soult omitted to send the requisite orders to Grouchy for the march of the cavalry, and it was only upon Napoleon's arrival at Laon, where were Grouchy's head-quarters, that the mistake was corrected. Even so the whole of the horse arrived at Avesnes on the night of the 13th, though not without forced marches exhausting to both beasts and men.

Thus the information which had reached the Allied commanders on the 12th, 13th and 14th was in the main correct. The movements of the Guard, of d'Erlon and Reille were accurately given, and the progress of Soult, *incognito*, was truly reported. It must, however, be said for Wellington and Blücher that marches and counter-marches of French troops upon the northern frontier had for weeks been incessant, and that, until the very end, any attempt to piece them together as an indication of the enemy's plans was hopeless. Both of the Allied Commanders have been reproached for not making greater use of their cavalry to penetrate Napoleon's intentions ; but it seems to be literally true that both of them, and not Wellington only, were embarrassed by uncertainty whether they were at war or at peace. Bülow pleaded his ignorance of the fact, that there had been no declaration of war, in excuse for the slowness of his movements, shortly to be narrated, on the 15th of June. Napoleon himself on the 7th of June denounced the action of

England in capturing a French frigate in the Mediterranean, as "bloodshed during peace"; and, as if conscious that the signal for opening the war lay with himself, he wrote definitely to Davoût on the 11th of June that hostilities would begin on the 14th. This peculiarity of the situation has, as it seems to me, escaped the notice of most of the later writers upon the campaign of 1815. It is urged by at least one of them that the manifesto of the Allied Powers of the 13th of March was in itself a declaration of war; but it was rather a decree of outlawry against an individual whose authority as ruler of France was expressly set aside. The document certainly implied that those who followed Napoleon's banner would do so at their peril; but beyond question, if the Allies had invaded France before Napoleon attacked them, they would have issued a proclamation calling upon all Frenchmen to dissociate themselves from him and promising them good treatment if they should do so. The Powers of Europe were dealing, as they well knew, with a military revolt, not with a national movement; and it would have been impolitic as well as contrary to their professions to treat the French nation as if it were the French army. On the other hand, it may justly be argued that, given such a state of uncertainty and the presence of a French host under Napoleon, the utmost care should have been taken that everything should be ready against a sudden attack. On the contrary, both Blücher and Wellington were so confident of their superiority that they took less instead of more than the ordinary precautions, feeling sure that Napoleon would not venture upon an offensive movement. They were wrong in their divination of his intentions; but their trust in their own strength was justified by the result.[1] 1815. June 14.

On the 14th, the anniversary of Marengo and Friedland, Napoleon issued the last of those stirring

[1] *Corres. de Napoléon*, 22023, 22040. Pollio, *Waterloo* (French translation), 101, 129 *n*.

1815. appeals which had so often stimulated his armies to
June 14. victory, and in the evening dictated his justly famous orders for the movements of the morrow. The army was to advance upon Charleroi in three principal columns; Reille's and d'Erlon's corps on the left by Thuin and Marchienne ; Vandamme's and Lobau's corps, the Imperial Guard and Grouchy's reserve of cavalry in the centre by Ham-sur-Heure and Marcinelle; Gérard's corps by Florennes and Gerpinnes. The whole were to be covered by a screen of cavalry from the centre column and headed by Domont's three regiments of mounted chasseurs, with Pajol's corps of six more regiments of light horse and two battalions of horse-artillery in support. Domont was to start at half-past two in the morning, Pajol and the heads of the infantry at three o'clock ; the foot taking the main roads and the horse the by-roads. Reille, Vandamme, Pajol and Gérard were to keep themselves in constant communication with each other so as to arrive in one united mass before Charleroi. In the centre column the 3rd Corps was to take the lead, to be followed by the 6th Corps at four o'clock and by the various sections of the Guard at half-hourly intervals between five and six. The pontoon-train was to provide three sections to throw as many bridges over the Sambre, which the Emperor intended to cross with his whole army before noon, he himself accompanying the advanced guard of the centre column. For the general purposes of the campaign he designed to divide his army into two wings and a reserve, the left wing under Ney, who was on the point of joining him, the right under Grouchy, and the reserve, which would be strengthened from one wing or the other, according to circumstances, under his personal command.

June 15. At half-past three in the morning of the 15th the French vanguards crossed the Netherlandish frontier at Leers, Cour-sur-Heure and Thy-le-Chateau ; but whether from neglect on the part of the staff or indolence on the part of the generals, there was delay in the

march of the rear of the columns. D'Erlon did not set the 1st Corps in motion until half-past four, instead of at three, as he had been bidden. The officer who was carrying the orders to Vandamme was disabled through a fall from his horse ; and, as Soult sent no second messenger, Vandamme had no knowledge of the intended movement until Lobau's corps came up to his bivouac. The 4th Corps, which should have marched from Philippeville at three, did not reach Florennes—a distance of not more than five miles—until seven o'clock, and was there bewildered and dismayed by the desertion to the Allies of one of its divisional generals, Bourmont, together with the whole of his staff. However, the advanced parties on the French centre and left in due time came into collision with the outposts of Pirch I.'s brigade, and pressed them slowly back from position to position until between nine and ten o'clock they reached the Sambre at Marchienne and Charleroi, and found the bridges barricaded and defended by infantry and guns. General Bachelu, whose division led Reille's column, threw away two hours before he finally cleared the passage at Marchienne. Even then, the bridge being narrow, it took four hours for Reille's corps to defile over the river ; and d'Erlon's corps in consequence did not even begin to cross until half-past four. Pajol having failed to carry the bridge of Charleroi by a charge of hussars, waited till eleven o'clock for the arrival of Vandamme's infantry, which, having started late, was still far away ; when up came Napoleon himself with a portion of the Young Guard, which, on learning of Vandamme's mishap, he had brought forward by cross-roads. Under the Emperor's direction, the barricade was soon broken down ; the Prussians retired, and Pajol detaching one regiment —the 1st Hussars—due north towards Gosselies and Quatre-Bras to clear the front of the left column, led his main body north-east upon Fleurus on the track of the retreating Prussians.

1815. June 15.

1815. June 15. Waiting at Charleroi to watch his troops defile over the river, Napoleon received at about two o'clock a message that the Prussians were showing themselves in force in Gosselies, and directed Reille to march his corps in that direction, sending meanwhile the light cavalry of the Guard under Lefebvre-Desnoëttes to support the 1st Hussars. D'Erlon was presently instructed to follow Reille, and Ney, reporting himself to the Emperor at three o'clock, was bidden to take command of this, the left wing, proceed to Gosselies and advance along the road to Brussels. At half-past three orders were sent to Gérard to make for the bridge at Châtelet instead of that at Charleroi, as originally ordered ; and meanwhile, as Vandamme's and Grouchy's troops debouched from the bridge, they were pushed north-eastward along the road to Gilly.

To deal first with the left wing, Reille's advanced cavalry was checked at Jumet by some of Ziethen's light horse and sharp-shooters, who were covering the retirement of Steinmetz's brigade from Fontaine l'Évêque through Gosselies upon Fleurus. After some delay the mounted troops on both sides came into collision ; but there was no decisive result until the French infantry, which had been hurried forward by Reille, came up, drove the sharp-shooters from Gosselies and occupied the village. Steinmetz's main body at this moment was still to west of Gosselies and therefore cut off from the direct road to Fleurus ; but with great decision he launched such troops as he had at hand upon the French as they issued from the village, drove them back and, by holding in force the houses at the north end, was able to draw off the bulk of his brigade north-eastward to Heppignies and so to its appointed destination. However, the road to Brussels was now thrown open ; and Ney, who had come up in the course of the combat, pushed Lefebvre-Desnoëttes's cavalry northward upon Quatre-Bras and directed Bachelu's infantry to follow him for three miles, as far as Mellet, in support.

Lefebvre-Desnoëttes met with no resistance until he reached Frasnes, about five miles north of Gosselies, where he came upon a battalion and a battery of Prince Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar's Nassau brigade, which lay in and about Quatre-Bras. The village had been prepared for defence; and, as the Nassauers showed a resolute front, Lefebvre sent a party round the eastern flank of his opponents, who thereupon retired to the border of the wood of Bossu, about a mile and a half to the south of Quatre-Bras. Following them up, Lefebvre found himself stopped abruptly by superior forces at this point; for Prince Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar, anticipating the orders of his divisional commander, Perponcher, had concentrated his brigade at Quatre-Bras and had sent two more battalions and a battery to reinforce his advanced party. Having only cavalry, and those of inferior numbers, under his hand, Lefebvre realised that it was impossible for him to attack. It was now nearly seven o'clock; and, even if he were to summon infantry from Gosselies, they could hardly come up before dark. He therefore fell back for the night to Frasnes, where a battalion of infantry joined him soon after sunset. He then sent in his report to Ney, giving the important information, gleaned from prisoners, that the troops which he had encountered at Frasnes had nothing to do with those that had been engaged at Gosselies. The latter, he explained, had retired eastward upon Fleurus; the former were under Wellington's command; and the bulk of the Netherlandish army lay westward about Mons with head-quarters at Braine-le-Comte.[1] 1815. June 15.

In the centre Pirch II. had occupied a strong position in rear of Gilly, with his front covered by a boggy rivulet; his seven battalions being skilfully disposed to present a great appearance of strength, and his flank towards the Sambre being watched by a regiment of dragoons. Grouchy, who had galloped

[1] A translation of the full text of this letter is printed by Col. James, p. 74.

1815. June 15. forward to reconnoitre, would not venture to attack without orders ; whereupon Napoleon hurried to the spot and, taking in the situation at a glance, directed him to assail Pirch II.'s front with one of Vandamme's divisions, to turn his left flank with Exelmans's corps of cavalry and to push on to Sombreffe. This done —the time being about half-past three—the Emperor returned to Charleroi to hasten the march of Vandamme's infantry ; but, hearing no sound of an engagement, he rode back soon after half-past five to Gilly and ordered Vandamme and Grouchy to attack immediately. Pirch II. thereupon began to retire, and, though some of his battalions were caught and very severely handled by the French cavalry, he made good his retreat with some loss to Fleurus, and was there allowed to rest in peace. Pajol's and Exelmans's troopers then bivouacked to south of Fleurus, covering Vandamme's infantry ; and Vandamme and Pajol sent in their reports to the Emperor. Vandamme's was to the effect that the Prussians, whom he reckoned at ten to fifteen thousand men, were in full retreat, having left only outposts of cavalry in Fleurus ; and Pajol confirmed this by stating that, if Vandamme had given him some infantry, he could have taken Fleurus. Their testimony therefore avouched the fact that the Allies had withdrawn towards the north-east.

On the right, Gérard's corps, having marched upon Charleroi, was delayed rather than hastened by the order that changed its direction to Châtelet, and hence only one of his divisions had crossed the Sambre before dark.

At nightfall therefore the French were thus posted according to Napoleon's distribution into two wings and a reserve. Of the right wing Pajol's and Exelmans's cavalry lay between Lambusart and Campinaire ; Vandamme's corps in and to the east of Soleilmont forest ; Hulot's division of Gérard's corps at Châtelineau, and the three remaining divisions south of the Sambre at Châtelet. Of the left wing the light

cavalry of the Guard was at Frasnes. Reille's corps was banked up in rear of it on the road to Brussels. D'Erlon's corps was at Marchienne, Bachelu's division lying at Mellet, Foy's and Jerome's in and about Gosselies, and Girard's division a little further to the east at Wangenies. Of the Reserve, the Young Guard was at Gilly, the Old Guard between that village and Charleroi, and the whole of Lobau's corps on the south bank of the Sambre. On the whole, therefore, Napoleon's first day's work had prospered. He had not reached the road which was the line of junction between the inner flanks of the Allies—the road, that is to say, which runs south-eastward from Nivelles to Namur—nor had he thrown more than two-thirds of his army across the Sambre ; but he had struck the advanced guards of both of the Allied armies and had found no main body massed behind them. He had met with brave but not very strenuous resistance ; he had inflicted substantial loss—some twelve hundred killed, wounded and prisoners—upon Ziethen's corps; and the two Allied armies had retired by divergent routes, the Netherlanders to the north and the Prussians to the east. So far, then, all seemed to promise well for his plan of forcing those two armies apart and beating each of them independently of the other. 1815. June 15.

On the side of the Allies the fact of the French advance became known to General Ziethen at half-past four in the morning of the 15th, through the sound of Reille's cannon and musketry when he fell upon Steinmetz's brigade at Thuin. Ziethen at once sent information to Blücher and fired the guns which gave the signal of alarm. At a quarter-past eight he despatched a second message reporting that the French had pushed back the Prussian advanced parties and had crossed the Sambre in force, that Napoleon was present in person with his Guard, and that the brigades of Steinmetz and Pirch II. were falling back to Gosselies and Gilly. He added that he had sent this intelligence to Wellington, with a request that the

1815. June 15. Duke should concentrate his army at Nivelles, in accordance with an intimation which General Müffling, Prussian attaché at the British head-quarters, had given on the previous day. To the first of these despatches Blücher replied that the IInd, IIIrd and IVth Corps had been ordered to concentrate, and that by evening they would be respectively at Onoz and Mazy, at Namur and at Hannut; and he added injunctions to observe the enemy closely, and to watch the old Roman road and in particular the neighbourhood of Binche. The substance of the second despatch was at once forwarded to Wellington's head-quarters by Gneisenau, with the further intelligence that the Prussian head-quarters would presently be transferred to Sombreffe, where they would await intelligence of Wellington's intentions. The whole of the Prussian army would likewise assemble on the morning of the 16th at Sombreffe, where Blücher intended to accept battle.

On Wellington's side of the field the Prince of Orange rode out at five in the morning to St. Symphorien, two miles east of Mons, whence, finding all quiet, he rode to Brussels to dine with Wellington. At noon there reached his head-quarters at Braine-le-Comte a letter from General Behr at Mons, reporting a French attack upon General Steinmetz and a lively fire about Charleroi, and adding that there was no sign of the enemy about Mons. This missive was at once forwarded by General Constant de Rebecque to Brussels, where the Prince of Orange communicated it to Wellington at three o'clock in the afternoon. A little later, further information came into Braine-le-Comte from General Chassé at Haine St. Pierre and General van Merlen at St. Symphorien, confirming the purport of Behr's letter, but containing the additional details that Steinmetz had evacuated Binche and would collect his brigade first at Gosselies. At two o'clock Constant forwarded this news also to Wellington; and apparently at about the same time

he sent orders to Perponcher to assemble his 1st brigade on the paved road near Nivelles, and his 2nd at Quatre-Bras, and to Generals Chassé and Collaert to gather their divisions together, the former at Fayt, the latter behind the Haine. Prince Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar had already placed his brigade in position at Quatre-Bras before receipt of any instruction from Perponcher ; but it does not appear that he sent in any report to Brussels of the approach of the French to his front. 1815. June 15.

The next intelligence, therefore, that Wellington received, so far as can be conjectured, was that despatched by Ziethen from Charleroi at nine in the morning, which arrived between three and four o'clock ; the rider having taken six hours to traverse thirty-four miles. An hour or so later Constant's second report came in. Müffling pressed Wellington to say whether he would concentrate his army, and where. The Duke answered that until he had further intelligence from Mons—for his latest report from that quarter was of half-past ten in the morning—he could not say, but that he would direct the whole army to be in readiness to march at any moment. This accordingly he did at six o'clock,[1] and at the same time he directed the Fourth Division on his extreme right to close in eastward from Oudenarde to Grammont. Further, the Prince of Orange was instructed to assemble the 2nd and 3rd Netherlandish divisions at Nivelles, and, if that place should have been attacked in course of the day, to summon thither also the First and Third British Divisions. At seven o'clock Müffling sent the purport of these orders to Gneisenau, adding that the Reserve, or a part of it, would move southward from Brussels when the moon rose. He also gave Wellington's judgment of the situation by the light of the very imperfect intelligence so far supplied to him. The

[1] The date 5 P.M. in *Wellington Desp.* is a mistake or a misprint. See James, p. 96, note.

1815. June 15. enemy—such was the Duke's view—intended either to follow the Sambre downward in order to join other columns which were coming up from the direction of Givet, or to attack in the neighbourhood of Fleurus and, in all probability, in that of Nivelles at the same time. Wellington's object was to be in position to meet this latter onslaught. If it were not delivered, then he would bring the whole of his force to Nivelles on the morrow, ready to support the Prussians, or, if the Prussians should have been already assailed, to fall upon the enemy's flank and rear according to the arrangement already concerted with Blücher.

Some time later, probably near eight o'clock, came in Gneisenau's letter, which had been despatched from Namur soon after noon. Here again the bearer had failed in his duty, for he had taken from seven to eight hours to traverse forty miles. The contents of the letter did little to improve Wellington's knowledge. Gneisenau stated that Ziethen had orders not to retire beyond Fleurus if he could possibly help it; and from this Wellington might infer that the bulk of the enemy's force had turned eastward; but there was not a word to show that this was actually the case. There was not even a hint to indicate that Charleroi was in the enemy's hands. The news of the Prussian concentration at Sombreffe was really no news but simply a confirmation of an existing understanding. Once again, therefore, Wellington said that he must await intelligence from Mons before deciding upon the rendezvous for his army; and it was not until ten o'clock that a letter came in from Dörnberg to say that there was nothing on his front. Thereupon Wellington sent out orders for the Reserve to march southward from Brussels to the cross-roads at Mont St. Jean, and for the rest of the army to make a general movement eastward, the Cavalry, Second and Fourth Divisions upon Enghien, the First Division upon Braine-le-Comte, and the Third Division upon Nivelles. This done, he went, together with most of

his superior officers, to a ball given by the Duchess of Richmond in Brussels, hoping by his presence to discourage sanguine enemies and to hearten despondent friends. 1815. June 15.

Thus it was that when the hundred and twenty thousand men of Napoleon were bivouacked compactly within the quadrilateral Frasnes, Fleurus, Châtelet, Marchienne, Wellington's army was dispersed practically over the entire extent of its original cantonments, while Blücher's had hardly begun its concentration. It is idle to contend that the Allies were not, in the military sense, surprised; but, masterly though was Napoleon's assembly of his troops, it was very greatly facilitated by the screen of fortresses and forest that lay ready to his hand, and far more than has been hitherto supposed by the fact that, so long as he remained within the boundaries of France, the Allies would not send even a patrol of cavalry to watch his movements. They could not have ventured to take the offensive and invade France without a declaration of their intentions, whereas it was open to Napoleon to cross the border and create a state of war whenever it might best suit him. "The enemy opened hostilities this morning," are the first words of Gneisenau's letter to Wellington; and, though this had been in a manner expected, yet such temerity as Napoleon's in bearding a force of twice his strength was in itself something of a surprise. Nevertheless, the backwardness of Wellington's concentration was due in great measure to avoidable causes. The Prussians fought their "delaying actions" sturdily and well; but their success shows that, if they had made better preparation for the defence and for the ultimate destruction of the bridges, they could have gained more time for the troops to assemble in their rear. More blameworthy by far was the omission of the Prussian staff to keep Wellington informed of the course of their proceedings during the day. It appears that Ziethen ceased to consider

1815. June 15. it his duty to report to the British Commander-in-Chief immediately after active operations had begun, that is to say, precisely at the moment when it was most necessary that Wellington should be fully apprised of all that was going forward. It was really monstrous that tidings of vital import should have been sent from Fleurus to Brussels by way of Namur, and that a journey of thirty miles should have been lengthened to nearly sixty. The tardiness of the despatch-riders was also disagreeably conspicuous; and Wellington in after years commented with biting humour on the fact that the fattest man in the Prussian army had been selected to carry to him a message which should have been transmitted with all possible speed. It will be seen that these were not solitary examples of the inefficiency of the Prussian staff.

CHAPTER XXIV

At the Duchess of Richmond's ball Wellington was ostentatiously light of heart ; but towards one o'clock on the morning of the 16th when the party had sat down to supper, a third messenger came in from Constant to the Prince of Orange with the news that the French had advanced up to Quatre Bras. Constant added that he had ordered Perponcher to push forward his 1st brigade to the support of Prince Bernhard's, and had warned Chassé and Collaert to be prepared to march with the 3rd Netherlandish Division and the cavalry to the help of Perponcher. It will be remembered that Wellington's orders of six o'clock had directed Perponcher's and Chassé's divisions to assemble at Nivelles. These orders came to Constant's hand, it seems, immediately after the despatch of his own instructions to Perponcher ; but with excellent judgment he took upon himself to disregard them, and to rely upon his own reading of the situation. Wellington with perfect coolness explained the state of affairs to his superior officers, and, after bidding them all withdraw as quietly and speedily as possible to their posts, left the ball at two o'clock and went to bed. He was awakened two or three hours later by General Dörnberg, who had ridden in from Mons, and to whom he gave instructions to hasten at once to Mont St. Jean and order Picton's division forward to Quatre Bras. Thanks to the foresight of Constant, that important point on the road of communication between the two

1815. June 16.

1815. Allied armies was temporarily secure ; and, with the
June 16. rest of his force at Nivelles, Braine-le-Comte and Enghien, the Duke was prepared to meet attack either on the direct road from Charleroi to Brussels or further to westward between Charleroi and Mons. But towards seven o'clock Wellington decided definitely that Quatre Bras was his true point of concentration, and issued further instructions for a continued eastward movement of the whole army upon that village, Genappe and Nivelles. Though it was still uncertain whether the French advance along the road from Charleroi to Brussels was made in any force, it was clear that, in any case, the Anglo-Netherlandish army must be at hand to support the Prussians if Napoleon's attack should be delivered against them.

The main significance of the reports brought in to Napoleon on the night of the 15th was that the Prussians had retired eastward, and the outposts of Wellington's army towards the north. He judged therefore that his primary object was attained. He had placed his own army between the two Allied hosts, and he was free to fall upon whichever of them he pleased to select. He had already decided that, of the twain, it would be preferable to attack first that of Blücher, whose fiery temperament would prompt him to fly to the succour of Wellington, whereas the British General, whom he judged to be slow and circumspect, would be less eager to march to the support of his Prussian colleague. It is characteristic of Napoleon that it never occurred to him that two commanders might act with unselfish loyalty towards each other. Good faith, upon principle and not for personal advantage, was a matter that lay beyond his horizon : he had always lied to his generals in Spain and they had always lied to him.[1] Had he been

[1] On the evening of this same 15th of June he had issued a bulletin claiming in one passage that the day's operations had cost the Prussians 2600 men, of which 1000 prisoners : and in another that 400 to 500 men had been sabred and 1750 captured—all at a cost to the French of 10 killed and 80 wounded. *Corres. de Napoléon*, 22056.

concerned with Gneisenau instead of with Blücher, his diagnosis of character would have been less incorrect; for Gneisenau was equally ignorant of the meaning of good faith, so much so, indeed, that the mere study of his character has infected one of his biographers with the same failing. However, having made this false assumption, Napoleon built his plan of campaign upon it. At four o'clock in the morning he sent an officer to Frasnes to learn how affairs stood in that quarter; and an hour later Soult despatched orders to Ney to ascertain the exact position of Reille's and d'Erlon's corps. Before eight o'clock the Emperor formulated his plan of operations for the day. Grouchy and the right wing were to march north-eastward upon Sombreffe and Gembloux, and to fall upon any Prussian corps that might be found in either position. Gérard's corps might be called in, if needed, for the attack on Sombreffe; but the Emperor did not expect to be opposed by more than forty thousand Prussians. He himself would reach Fleurus between ten and eleven o'clock, leave the whole of his Guard there, and push on alone to Sombreffe. Having ascertained that Sombreffe and Gembloux were clear of the enemy, he would lead his reserve to join the left wing at Quatre Bras, from whence both united would make a night march northward and by seven o'clock in the morning of the 17th should have reached Brussels. He impressed upon Ney the importance of occupying Brussels, which, as he reckoned, might produce great results; for so prompt and sudden a march would isolate the British from Mons and Ostend. 1815. June 16.

These orders show that on the morning of the 16th Napoleon's ideas of the whereabouts of his enemy were of the vaguest. He evidently did not expect to find Blücher in force either at Sombreffe or at Gembloux, and, supposing that his expectations proved to be correct, he considered it safe to infer that the Prussians had withdrawn to a secure distance eastward, and that he could devote his principal attention to Wellington.

1815. Equally he expected to find the British in retreat.
June 16. In the supplementary orders sent by Soult to Ney, it was enjoined upon the latter to occupy Quatre Bras with two corps of infantry and one of cavalry, push on a division of infantry and some cavalry to Genappe, and send out reconnaissances towards Brussels and Nivelles, upon which latter point the Anglo-Netherlanders would probably have retreated. In other words, he looked that the bare terror of his advance between them should have caused both of their armies to retreat, each towards its own base, in opposite directions, which was the very thing that Blücher and Wellington had agreed not to do. Against this inference, however, must be set the remarkable allusion to Mons and Ostend in the letter to Ney; for, if the British were retiring to the west, it is very clear that a rapid advance from Quatre Bras to Brussels would isolate them from neither the one place nor the other. Indeed, if Wellington, upon the news of Ney's rapid advance, should face about and march eastward, he would fall full upon the Emperor's flank. On the other hand, if we assume that the advance to Brussels was deliberately conceived with the idea of cutting Wellington's communications to westward, then obviously Napoleon expected the Anglo-Netherlandish army to be at Brussels or to east of it. In that case Wellington's purpose was not to be mistaken. He intended to sacrifice his line of operations with Ostend rather than his contact with the Prussian army; and, as we have seen, the Duke had promised Gneisenau that he would take this course in the event of a retreat. Had some inkling of this promise and of Wellington's extreme anxiety to preserve Brussels and Ghent reached the Emperor's ears? If it had, and if he really believed that the Duke had retired north and eastward, then evidently his plan of falling upon the Allied armies in detail and beating them separately was already wrecked. Meanwhile, he was for the present too prudent to take anything unverified for granted.

He told Ney plainly that his final decision could not be made until the afternoon or evening, after he had explored the ground as far as Gembloux ; and he bade the Marshal post a division at Marbais, as a central point between Quatre Bras, Sombreffe and Gembloux, so that he could summon it to the support of the right wing in case of need. Moreover, the division at Marbais was instructed to throw out reconnaissances in every direction, particularly towards Gembloux and even towards Wavre, the latter place being nearly fourteen miles due north of Sombreffe. This indicates that the Emperor kept in view the possibility that the two Allied armies might make a convergent retreat towards the north. In fact, he was utterly in the dark as to the actual positions and intentions of his enemies ; and his conjectures were founded upon the false hypothesis that the defeat which he had inflicted upon the Prussians was so serious as to make retreat the only possible course for both armies. 1815. June 16.

On the evening of the 15th the Prussian army was still for the most part far from its point of concentration, the IInd Corps being between Mazy and Onoz, and the Vth near Namur ; but orders had been sent to hasten them forward, and some of them were on march during the night. The IVth corps was hopelessly out of reach. Gneisenau had sent Bülow only a polite request, instead of a positive order, to move to Hannut on the 15th ; and the latter General, ignorant that hostilities had begun, ignorant that a general concentration of the army was in progress, and thinking that, if it were, it would take place at Hannut, made no speed to arrive at the place betimes, and was still far east of it when night fell. Fresh orders were despatched by Blücher to Hannut late in the forenoon of the 15th, bidding Bülow hasten to Gembloux at the earliest possible hour on the 16th ; but, as Bülow was not at Hannut, the letter did not reach him until hard upon midnight, when he returned the inevitable answer, that it was physically impossible

1815. for his corps to reach Gembloux at the appointed
June 16. time. At about the same hour Gneisenau recalled Ziethen's corps from Fleurus to Sombreffe, and by eight o'clock in the morning of the 16th it was assembled in position between St. Amand and Ligny ; the IInd and IIIrd Corps being still far in rear. By that time it is to be presumed that Müffling's last letter from Brussels had come to Blücher's hand ; and at half-past ten there reached him a note from a Prussian aide-de-camp, who had been sent at five o'clock in the morning to Quatre Bras, reporting that the French were still at Frasnes and that their patrols had interrupted communication between the two armies for a time during the night, but that the Prince of Orange expected the whole of the Netherlandish army and most of the British to be concentrated near Nivelles by ten o'clock. At about eleven o'clock Pirch I.'s corps came up and was placed provisionally between the Roman road and Sombreffe ; and an hour later Thielmann's corps likewise presented itself and was arrayed on the left of Pirch's from Sombreffe to Tongrinne. The total force thus assembled numbered about eighty-two thousand men with two hundred and twenty-four guns.

The Prince of Orange, meanwhile, had left Brussels in haste and reached his head-quarters at Braine-le-Comte at half-past three. After a few words with Constant he confirmed all the orders given by the Chief of his Staff, who then rode off to Quatre Bras. Acting with a strength of initiative not less admirable than Constant's own, Perponcher had kept Prince Bernhard's brigade in its former station and had brought down half of his 2nd brigade, Bijlandt's, to support it. On his way Constant sent forward Bijlandt's two remaining battalions and artillery from Nivelles to join their division, and on reaching Quatre Bras found Perponcher already engaged in making his dispositions and in driving back the French advanced posts. At six o'clock the Prince of Orange arrived

and, by Perponcher's advice, extended his front to give a greater appearance of strength. He sent Constant to Nivelles to look to the disposition of Chassé's division and of Alten's which, once again through the initiative of Constant, had been bidden to continue its march from Soignies to Nivelles. He also despatched orders to the Guards to continue their march from Braine-le-Comte to the same place—orders which miscarried, for Cooke did not receive them until he reached Nivelles in the afternoon, having proceeded thither by his own motion. In the course of these proceedings Blücher's aide-de-camp arrived and was sent back with the answer which has already been quoted ; and at seven o'clock the Prince reported his proceedings to Wellington, adding that the French were at Frasnes, with both infantry and cavalry, but not as yet in force. There was in fact nothing so far to show that the French advance upon the road to Brussels might not after all be a feint, disguising a turning movement further to the west. 1815. June 16.

So the morning of the 16th wore on. At nine o'clock the Allies had still only six thousand five hundred men and eight guns at Quatre Bras ; and shortly after that hour Wellington arrived. From some stragglers of Steinmetz's brigade he at length learned some details of what had happened on the previous day, how the French had crossed the Sambre at Charleroi and Marchienne, had driven Ziethen back after sharp encounters at Fleurus and Gosselies, and had penetrated by patrols as far as the road between Sombreffe and Quatre Bras. He appeared surprised and indeed incredulous, as well he might, for not the slightest report of these things had been sent to him from any Prussian source ; but he congratulated the Prince of Orange and Perponcher upon their courage in acting upon their own judgment, and approved their dispositions in every particular. Riding forward to reconnoitre for himself, he found that he could see nothing owing to woods and folds of ground, and, as

1815. the Prince of Orange had no cavalry with him, the
June 16. Duke was obliged to be content with conjecture. At half-past ten, having at last ascertained the whereabouts of Blücher, he wrote him a letter to the effect that the Prince of Orange's corps was at Quatre Bras and Nivelles, that the Reserve and the British cavalry were on march and would reach Genappe and Nivelles at noon, that Hill was at Braine-le-Comte, that he himself could perceive no great force of the enemy before him, and that he awaited news from the Prussian head-quarters and the arrival of his troops before deciding upon the day's operations. This intelligence, supplied to Wellington by his staff, was very inaccurate, as the subsequent narrative will prove; but the Duke furnished it in good faith and based his own actions upon the assumed truth of it. The insinuations of German writers, that he wrote this letter with the deliberate purpose of deceiving Blücher and making him fight a battle to cover the concentration of the Anglo-Netherlandish army, deserve nothing more than contempt.[1]

[1] It is a pity that General Pollio (French translation, pp. 197-8) should write: "Sortons du champ des suppositions—Wellington était peut-être plus diplomate que général, il faisait partie du cabinet anglais bien qu'éloigné de Londres, il occupait une position très élevée, supérieure à celle de Blücher, et il s'attribuait en outre une telle supériorité dans son orgueil brittannique qu'il a probablement cru agir avec Blücher comme il avait agi dans la Péninsule avec ses alliés portugais et espagnols." It is well when quitting the domain of conjecture at least not to exchange it for that of fiction, not to say falsehood. Wellington was certainly an able diplomatist, but he did not base his diplomacy upon deceit, as General Pollio quite gratuitously assumes. He was not a member of the British Cabinet, to which he seldom wrote more acrimonious letters than during this short campaign. Finally, any one conversant with the history of the Peninsular war (which no foreigner is, and General Pollio very manifestly is not) would know that, even if it were true that Wellington endeavoured to save himself by deceiving Blücher, no parallel case could be adduced from his relations with the Spaniards and Portuguese. General Pollio evidently is not even aware that the Portuguese troops were commanded by a British General, paid by the British Treasury, and mingled in every division with British troops—a pretty critic to pronounce judgment on Wellington whether as General, diplomatist or man.

Shortly afterwards the Duke rode on with Müffling to Ligny to see Blücher. He met the old Field-marshal near Brye on the right of the chosen battle-field, where the troops were already forming for the combat; and he observed with astonishment that they were so arrayed on the forward slope of the hill that no cannon-shot could help striking the supports and reserves, even if it should miss the fighting line. He protested mildly. "Every man knows his own troops best," he hinted; "but if my troops were so disposed I should expect them to be beaten." Such criticism, however gently advanced, was not likely to commend itself to a theorist such as Gneisenau, who, besides, was more concerned with the help that Wellington might be able to afford him than with his own dispositions. The Duke, who was still inclined to think that the French were only making a demonstration before Frasnes, had, during the ride to Ligny, declared to Müffling his willingness to bring his whole force, if possible, to the assistance of the Prussians; and, though no record of his conversation with Blücher is preserved, there can be no doubt that he repeated to the Field-marshal the substance of the words which he had already used to the attaché. From the mill of Bussy, which commanded a great extent of ground, the French columns could be seen advancing to the attack; and Gneisenau, thinking that practically the whole French army was before him, urged the Duke to bring as large a force as possible to Brye to act as a reserve to the Prussian army. Wellington, supported by Müffling, was inclined rather to overthrow the French force before him at Quatre Bras and march on Gosselies, that is to say upon the rear of the main French army. The discussion was closed by Wellington, who said, "Well, I will come, if I am not attacked myself"; and therewith he started to ride back to Quatre Bras. It was then apparently between half-past one and two o'clock. 1815. June 16.

Let us return now to the French side. Ney received

1815. in succession Napoleon's own order and Soult's, which
June 16. was to the same effect, somewhere about eleven o'clock. He answered at that hour that he was making his dispositions accordingly, that there appeared to be only three thousand infantry and a very few cavalry in his front, and that, in his opinion, there would be little obstacle in the way of the Emperor's dispositions for the march on Brussels. Meanwhile Napoleon, having given Grouchy his orders and summoned Gérard to bring the whole of his corps across the Sambre and lead it straight upon Sombreffe, prepared to ride to Fleurus. Just before he started he received, apparently some time before ten o'clock, a message from the left wing, stating that the enemy was showing considerable strength at Quatre Bras ; whereupon he forwarded to Ney through Soult the following order, which was little more than a confirmation of those already despatched. "Assemble Reille's and d'Erlon's corps, and Kellermann's, which will march to join you at once. With these you should be able to defeat and destroy any force of the enemy that might present themselves. Blücher was at Namur yesterday, and is not likely to have sent troops to Quatre Bras, so you will have none but those that come from Brussels to deal with." Here again we meet with the same confusion of thought as appears in Napoleon's first order already quoted. What did he mean by "the force coming from Brussels?" Why should no hostile force come up from the west? Or, if the British at large were retiring westward, why should they march southward from Brussels at all, when they could join the general retreat by moving by the great road to Ninove? On the other hand, if a French advance upon Brussels was to cut the British off from the base at Ostend, obviously the bulk of the British force must be to east or north-east of Brussels, in which case their movement southward from the capital might be very formidable. But still more remarkable is the fact that the purport of the message delivered to

Napoleon as to the strength of the Allies at Quatre Bras must have been made known to Ney before he wrote his answer to the Emperor's first orders, and that, having once declared the force at that village to be trifling, he was at no pains to contradict it. The French commanders one and all seem to have based their plans upon hypotheses which they took not the slightest pains to verify by reconnaissance. 1815. June 16.

At about eleven o'clock Napoleon reached Fleurus and, ascending to the summit of a mill, surveyed Blücher's position at Ligny. He reckoned correctly that he had only one corps before him, though there were signs already of the approach of others, and resolved to attack at once, but was annoyed to find that Gérard's corps had not come up. Soult had sent off his orders to Gérard between seven and eight o'clock, but they seem to have taken two hours to travel four miles, for they did not come to hand until half-past nine, or at any rate Gérard did not set his troops in motion until that hour. It was then necessary for them to defile across the narrow bridge at Châtelet, and thus it was half-past one before they reached the field of action. At two o'clock the Emperor sent through Soult a fourth message to Ney, which conditionally cancelled the previous instructions respecting the march to Brussels. Its purport was that the Prussians had assembled a corps between Sombreffe and Brye, which would be attacked by Grouchy with the 3rd and 4th Corps at half-past two. Ney was therefore required to drive back with vigour whatever hostile troops might be in front of him, and, having done so, to fall back towards the right wing so as to envelop the Prussians aforesaid. If, on the other hand, the Emperor should have already defeated them, he would manœuvre in Ney's direction to hasten the accomplishment of the operations prescribed to the Marshal.

At three o'clock Napoleon's dispositions were complete and he ordered the attack to begin. He

1815. had at his disposal the 3rd and 4th Corps (Van-
June 16. damme's and Gérard's), Girard's division of Reille's corps, Lobau's corps, which was ordered forward from Charleroi just as the battle began, also Pajol's, Exelmans's and Milhaud's corps of cavalry, in all seventy-six thousand men, or deducting Lobau's corps, which was not actually on the spot, sixty-five thousand men. By this time Napoleon was alive to the fact that he had before him not a corps but an army ; but he was elated rather than depressed by the fact, for he asked nothing better than to have done with Blücher at a stroke. "The issue of this war may be decided in three hours," he said. "If Ney executes my orders properly, not a gun of this army will escape"; and therewith he despatched to Ney a fifth set of instructions. "We are heavily engaged with the Prussians" (such was its purport), "manœuvre at once so as to envelope their right and fall with clenched fists upon their rear. If you act with vigour this army of theirs is lost. The fate of France is in your hands. Lose not a moment in marching on the heights of St. Amand and Brye, to share in what may be a decisive victory." These instructions completely ignored the possibility that Ney might have an enemy in front of him ; and, just at the moment, as it happened, a letter reached the Emperor from Lobau, telling him that Ney was confronted with twenty thousand men at Quatre Bras. The news did not disconcert Napoleon. If Ney could not spare his whole army, he must hold the enemy before him in check with Reille's corps only, and send d'Erlon's to make the turning movement upon Blücher's right. Napoleon accordingly sent an order to this effect to Ney.

The battle of Ligny forms no part of the history of the British army, and only the briefest summary of its course can be given here. Napoleon opened the fight by a vigorous attack upon Blücher's right and centre, which was met by as strenuous a defence, and

by counter-attacks which were resisted by the French with a stubbornness equal to that of the Prussians themselves. After more than two hours of a bitter struggle no ground had been gained by either party; and, since Lobau's corps was now approaching, Napoleon resolved to launch the Guard to a supreme attack against the Prussian centre; hoping to cleave the army in twain, surround the right wing with the help of d'Erlon, and drive the left wing eastward upon Namur. The dispositions had been made and the attack was about to begin when the Emperor was informed that a strong hostile column was bearing down upon his left flank, and in fact that the French troops in that quarter were falling back in disorder, or, in plain words, running away. Perforce he suspended the assault of his Guard and sent half of them to strengthen the threatened flank. Blücher seized the moment to aim a great counter-stroke at the French left. He was, however, repulsed, and presently the Emperor learned that the supposed hostile column was d'Erlon's corps. So intense seems to have been his relief at this welcome tidings that he forgot everything else in the renewal of his attack upon the Prussian centre; while d'Erlon, who had just received a pressing order from Ney to return to Quatre Bras, counter-marched and left the field of Ligny behind him. 1815. June 16.

By about seven o'clock all was ready; and after a heavy cannonade the Guard were let loose to the assault. Blücher, having already used up his reserves on his right, had little infantry with which to meet them. The gallant old warrior therefore led his reserve cavalry in person to the charge, but his troops could make no impression upon the Guard, and were repulsed with great loss. His horse was shot under him, and while on the ground he was ridden over and trampled on, only escaping at last on a sergeant's horse, bruised, shaken, and hardly conscious. The whole of the Prussian centre broke up in disorder, and

1815. June 16. the battle was lost. Sixty-five thousand French had beaten eighty-three thousand Prussians, through the fault, not of the Prussian rank and file, but of Gneisenau and his colleagues of the staff, who had chosen a very defective position in the first place and defended it very unskilfully in the second. With a superiority of nearly four to three they should certainly have given a better account of Napoleon ; and it is childish to contend, as German writers have with unblushing effrontery contended, that Blücher would not have accepted battle had he not counted upon help from Wellington. Blücher was firmly resolved to fight in any circumstances ; [1] and, if his tactical skill had been equal to his courage and constancy, the result would amply have justified his determination.

On the French left wing Ney, apparently confident that he would meet with little resistance at Quatre Bras, made no preparations for an advance before receiving the Emperor's commands. Nor were these, as we have seen, at the outset of a nature to demand particular activity or haste, since they gave him to understand that no serious work would be expected of him before nightfall. He issued therefore no orders for the march of his infantry upon the road to Brussels until eleven o'clock, which signified that Reille's divisions were not fairly in movement before noon, and that the head of the column did not reach Frasnes until half-past one. At this spot there were already Bachelu's division, about five thousand men, Piré's and Lefebvre-Desnoëttes's light cavalry, rather under four thousand men, and twenty-six guns.

The hamlet of Quatre Bras lies at the intersection of the roads that lead from Brussels to Charleroi and from Nivelles to Namur, at a point about two and a half miles due north of Frasnes. On an elevation, slightly higher than the undulating ground on every side, stood a very large farm-house and buildings, with a few labourers' cottages, all clustered about the actual

[1] See James, p. 113.

cross-roads. To westward of the cross the Namur road passes through a deep cutting to an embankment, and to eastward from an embankment to a cutting, forming in either case a natural line of defence. From the farm the ground slopes gently southward along the Brussels road to a tiny rivulet which, rising about five hundred yards west of the road, passed under it, and was dammed up about a thousand yards farther east into a wedge-shaped pond, called the Materne Pond, broadening at its eastern end, and measuring about four hundred yards from east to west. At the foot of the slope which rises southward from this rivulet, and just on the eastern side of the Brussels road, stood another farm, that of Gemioncourt ; and from the rivulet itself, which likewise bears the name of Gemioncourt, the ground ascends gently for some six hundred yards and ripples away southward towards Frasnes, throwing out, however, within eleven hundred yards of Gemioncourt, a well-marked spur to the east, which is defined along its southern flank by a second small rivulet, whose course is parallel to that of Gemioncourt. Near the eastern extremity of this spur and about three-quarters of a mile east of the Brussels road stands another group of farm buildings known as Pireaumont farm. West of the road and nearly a mile south-west of Gemioncourt farm, the farm of Grand Pierrepont marks the source of another rivulet, that of Odomont, which flows through a depression in a south-westerly direction, passing a second farm, Petit Pierrepont, some eight hundred yards on its downward course. The other main features of the ground were two woods of considerable extent, of which the first, Hutte Wood, extended from a point a little south of Pireaumont for some two thousand yards southward, with a breadth of rather less than a mile east and west. The other wood, that of Bossu, extended west of the Brussels road, practically from Quatre Bras farm to within six hundred yards of Grand Pierrepont, gradually widening out from a

1815. June 16.

1815. June 16. breadth of about five hundred yards by Quatre Bras to sixteen hundred yards abreast of Gemioncourt, and then running out into a narrow tongue from the south-western corner towards Pierrepont. This Bossu Wood was of very thick coppice with high but scanty standards, and was traversed by broad rides convenient for the passage of troops. North of the Namur road yet another smaller wood—Bois des Cerises or Cherry Wood—stretched from the road itself opposite to the Materne Pond almost to the village of Sart-Dame-Avelines. Round the buildings there were orchards and gardens ; on the borders of the stream were little thickets and rows of trees ; and the open country was covered with tall crops of corn. Altogether the position was blind, and, in the hands of a capable commander, well susceptible of defence ; though the Hutte Wood effectively screened the movements of an enemy coming up from the south on the eastern side of the Brussels road.

Guided by the advice of Perponcher, the Prince of Orange extended one battalion in skirmishing order along the spur between the rivulets of Gemioncourt and Pireaumont to the Brussels road, and thence south-westward along the Odomont rivulet ; the farms of Pireaumont and Petit Pierrepont forming the two extremities of the line to left and right, with one battery upon the road in the centre. Next in rear of them four battalions were stationed near the southern border of Bossu Wood, with two more battalions, also in the wood, in support. Another battery was posted at the south-eastern angle of the wood, and between it and Gemioncourt farm, which was strongly occupied ; and three more battalions were echeloned along the road from Quatre Bras farm to Gemioncourt. In all, at two o'clock the Prince had at his disposal about seven thousand men with sixteen guns ; and at three o'clock the arrival of another battalion, which had been released from Nivelles by the coming of Chassé's and Alten's divisions to that place, increased his number

to nearly eight thousand. To hold a good two miles of front with so weak a detachment could not but be hazardous; but it was imperative for the moment to make a show of strength; and every credit must be given to Perponcher for the bold face with which he confronted a critical situation. 1815. June 16.

At about two o'clock the head of Bachelu's division —Husson's brigade—under the personal direction of Reille, debouched on to the plateau at the north-western corner of Hutte Wood. Ney, with Piré's light cavalry of the line and Lefebvre-Desnoëttes's of the Guard, was already on the ground, and had ridden forward with a single aide-de-camp to reconnoitre. Unable to see many troops, he concluded that the position was weakly held, and was for assailing Bossu Wood without delay. Reille, however, who had observed the scarlet uniforms of British officers, remembered Wellington's custom of hiding his men, and pleaded that more battalions should be brought up before opening the attack. There was therefore a pause, whilst Bachelu's second brigade and Foy's division came forward to the plateau, when four columns were formed and directed upon the spur between Pireaumont and the Brussels road. On the extreme right or east were Piré's division of cavalry, next to the left of it were the two brigades of Bachelu's division, Campy's on the right and Husson's on the left; and the left column of all was made up of Jamin's brigade of Foy's division. Gauthier's brigade, together with the cavalry of Lefebvre-Desnoëttes and Guiton's cuirassiers were held in reserve on the road. The rest of Kellermann's cavalry corps, to which Guiton's brigade belonged, had been stationed by Ney at Liberchies, about two miles south-west of Frasnes. Jerome's division of infantry was on the march from Gosselies, and d'Erlon's corps was following in rear of it. Altogether Ney could reckon that he had thirty-five thousand infantry, seven thousand cavalry, and ninety-two guns under his hand or within easy call, of which he had detached

1815. for his first attack about six thousand infantry, two
June 16. thousand cavalry, and six guns.

Before the advance of numbers so overwhelming the Netherlandish skirmishers fell back towards Gemioncourt, where Perponcher installed them in and about the buildings ; and the Prince of Orange withdrew the two batteries from their advanced positions to a knoll a short distance south of Quatre Bras from which they could rake the Brussels road. Foy then changed the direction of his column to the left, and drove the Netherlanders from Gemioncourt. These retreated hastily up the road, but were unlucky enough to be charged and utterly dispersed by Piré, who, finding his way obstructed by boggy ground, had returned to the highway. Meanwhile the head of Jerome's column came up, releasing Gauthier's brigade and enabling Ney to press the Netherlanders back from Pierrepont into Bossu Wood. There the French could advance but slowly, for the undergrowth was exceedingly thick, and the Netherlanders offered some resistance. Nevertheless the enemy mastered the borders of the wood and pressed their opponents surely and steadily backward. Let Netherlandish writers say what they will, the initial efforts of their comrades do not appear to have been very strenuous on this day. The advanced posts were not held with the tenacity which the occasion demanded, and the troops did not respond as they ought to the leadership of the gallant young Prince and the brave and skilful General who were at their head.

They were now, however, in great measure to redeem their character. Wellington had returned from Ligny; and soon after two o'clock the leading battalions of Picton's division came into sight,[1] Kempt's brigade leading, and the Ninety-fifth, apparently, at the head of the column. Van Merlen's

[1] Accounts vary as to the time when Picton's division came up. The head of the column must have come in about 2 P.M.

brigade of Netherlandish cavalry arrived at almost the same moment, and the legion of the Duke of Brunswick was following close in the rear of Picton. In the desperate situation of the moment Wellington saw no salvation but in a counter-attack.[1] He therefore directed the Riflemen to move at once upon Pireaumont and to endeavour to regain it, but at all events to secure Cherry Wood so as to ensure the safety of the Namur road and so of communication with the Prussian army. At the same time he ordered the Netherlanders to recover Gemioncourt and sent the Twenty-eighth down to help to hold the buildings. The remainder of Picton's division was diverted round the east side of Quatre Bras, with instructions to align itself along the Namur road, the Ninety-second forming the right of the line with its right resting on the buildings, and then in succession upon its left, the Forty-second, Forty-fourth, Royal Scots, Thirty-second and Seventy-ninth,[2] with Rogers's battery of artillery on the right and Rettberg's on the left of the array. Best's Hanoverian brigade[3] was ordered to stand in second line behind the British battalions. On the right Prince Bernhard, likewise, was bidden to make a counter-attack and to clear Bossu Wood of the enemy. 1815. June 16.

These dispositions required some time for their execution, for it was long before the last of the regiments arrived ; and meanwhile the Riflemen, before they were half-way to Pireaumont, saw the enemy throw so powerful a force into the farm as to make attack hopeless. Another body of French was pushing on towards Cherry Wood, but here the Riflemen

[1] The true significance of this counter-attack is missed, as it seems to me, by all writers except Müffling. Wellington, *Supp. Desp.* x. 511.

[2] This order is conjectural. It is, however, certain that the 92nd was on the extreme right and the 79th on the extreme left, also (*Waterloo Letters*, p. 377) that the 42nd was on the right of the 44th instead of on the left, as it should have been.

[3] This brigade belonged to the Reserve and not to Picton's division at all ; but by some mistake had been sent forward with it.

1815. anticipated them, and, throwing their reserve into the
June 16. wood, lined the road with their skirmishers and engaged the enemy hotly. Gradually the green-jackets extended their line down the road to the hamlet of Thyle, where two companies ensconced themselves in the houses and for the present secured their left flank. In the centre the Dutch Militia recovered Gemioncourt, and deploying in front of the farm beat off an attack of the French cavalry; but, finding themselves outflanked by the advance of Foy on their right, they were obliged to evacuate the buildings once more. The British Twenty-eighth, seeing that it had arrived too late, thereupon counter-marched and returned to their division. Prince Bernhard, on his side, took the offensive with great spirit in Bossu Wood, drove the French with the bayonet from a part that they had taken, and, with the help of a fresh battalion sent to him by the Prince of Orange, made shift to maintain the advantage that he had won.

Wellington's counter-stroke had at least gained time for Picton to set his division in order, and for part of the Duke of Brunswick's legion to reach the scene of action; though it had failed to recover the important posts on his centre and left. The possession of Gemioncourt and of the skirts of Bossu Wood enabled Ney to bring forward his whole army without further interruption; and, as he appears to have received at about this time Soult's letter bidding him drive his enemy back and then swing round to attack the Prussians at Brye, he launched his attack along the whole line in earnest. Sixteen guns were massed to east of the Brussels road, and twenty-six between Pireaumont and Gemioncourt. On his right Bachelu advanced from Pireaumont against the troops on the Namur road; in his centre Foy led his division in two columns along the Brussels road and to the east of it upon Quatre Bras; and on the left Jerome threw Soye's brigade into Bossu Wood and led Bauduin's brigade parallel with Foy's division on the western

side of the road. A heavy cannonade heralded the onslaught, and it should seem that Bachelu's division was the first to come to close action, for his sharp-shooters were already working deadly mischief among the British gunners before more than the leading section of Rogers's battery had come into action. The bulk of Picton's division was hidden among the dense crops of rye which covered the fields, and the skirmishers of both sides were hotly engaged, when Wellington suddenly ordered Kempt's brigade to rise and advance. Whether dismayed by the unexpected apparition, or shaken by the British volley, Bachelu's leading regiment, the 2nd Light, broke and fled without awaiting the charge,[1] and the whole division, turning tail, rushed down the hill to the Gemioncourt rivulet and would not be rallied even on the plateau beyond it. 1815. June 16.

Most of the British battalions pursued no farther than to a hedge at a short distance from the Namur road; but the Forty-second and Forty-fourth advanced to within a short distance of Gemioncourt, and the Seventy-ninth, which by Wellington's order had begun the offensive movement before the rest of the battalions, pressed the chase to the rivulet and even beyond it. Foy, however, observing the rout of Bachelu, had withdrawn the 100th regiment from Jamin's brigade, and, after bidding that officer continue his advance to Quatre Bras, had betaken himself with the 100th to the plateau south of Gemioncourt. It was he who arrested the career of the three battalions, though the Seventy-ninth, taking shelter behind a fence, fired volleys at the 100th until its ammunition was exhausted. Not for some time did the Camerons retire, when, on receiving orders to fall back, they stole warily from fence to fence and, covered by the

[1] This is the account given by Foy, *Girod de l'Ain*, p. 271. He says that four British battalions charged; but the 95th was still detached from Kempt's brigade, so that there can have been only three.

1815. Thirty-second, regained without serious loss their
June 16. original position. From a few of the most headlong of the Seventy-ninth, whom he made prisoners, Foy learned that eight British brigades had just come in from Enghien and Brussels, and that others besides Netherlanders were on march to Quatre Bras. This intelligence he no doubt transmitted to Ney.

On the French left the progress of Soye in Bossu Wood was immediate ; raw troops, such as the Netherlanders, having little chance in forest-fighting against veterans ; and Wellington, in order to guard their left flank and give them confidence, sent two Brunswick battalions down the road to a point midway between Quatre Bras and Gemioncourt, stationing the Brunswick cavalry immediately behind them. Lastly, he posted two more battalions in the corner of the wood adjoining Quatre Bras with orders to fight to the last extremity. The foremost of these troops soon suffered heavily from the fire of a French battery on the road above Gemioncourt ; and four British guns, which the Duke of Brunswick had borrowed from Wellington and unlimbered by his infantry, were quickly silenced. Shortly afterwards the columns of Jamin, Gauthier and Bauduin approached on both sides of the road, and both Brunswickers and Netherlanders gradually gave way before them. The Duke of Brunswick, taking command of his squadron of lancers, charged the advancing French to cover the retreat of his infantry and hussars, but was beaten back with heavy loss. The lancers fled to the rear of Quatre Bras, whither the hussars also retired in more orderly fashion. One of Brunswick's regiments of infantry, under his personal command, struck eastward from the Brussels road towards Picton's division, but the other, harried by the pursuing French skirmishers and by the round-shot of the French batteries, broke and fled in all directions. The Duke of Brunswick, hurrying back, tried to rally them under cover of a house and garden called the Bergerie, upon the road

about three hundred yards south of Quatre Bras, but fell mortally wounded by a bullet through the body. Now Piré's cavalry, two regiments of chasseurs leading and two regiments of lancers in rear, came galloping up the road to complete their success; and the Brunswick Hussars were formed again to meet them, together, it appears, with Van Merlen's cavalry, which had been hastily ordered to the front by the Prince of Orange. Both were overthrown and put to flight without difficulty by the chasseurs and they streamed away, some straight up the Brussels road to Quatre Bras, some eastward towards the Namur road. The chasseurs, close at the heels of the former, flew up the highway after them, while the lancers, wheeling sharply to their right, took up the chase of those that had turned east; and pursuers and pursued in a mixed body crowded into the angle between the two roads. 1815. June 16.

The Ninety-second, which was the last of Picton's battalions to come up, had not long taken up their position, under Wellington's own eye, immediately on the east side of Quatre Bras; the men lying down in the ditch on the south side of the Namur road to gain shelter from the fire of the French batteries in their front. As the chasseurs approached them the Duke, who was watching the fight a short distance in front of the Highlanders, was obliged to turn and gallop for his life; and, crying to the men to lie still, he put his horse at the ditch, leaped over them, and took his place in rear of the regiment. As the leading files of the chasseurs whirled up the Brussels road, the right-hand company of the Ninety-second wheeled round parallel to it and poured a destructive fire upon their right flank, while the Brunswickers in the north-eastern angle of Bossu Wood simultaneously rained bullets upon their left flank. This cross-fire fairly cut the column of the chasseurs in twain. The rear-most rallied and retired in good order, but the foremost pressed on into the village and beyond it, cutting down

1815. June 16. stragglers and fugitives; when, finding themselves unable to retreat by the way of their advance, they tried to find egress through the buildings or along the Namur road in rear of the Highlanders, and were shot down to a man. At this point, therefore, the onset of the cavalry was checked with heavy loss.

The lancers were more fortunate in their venture. As they swept past the right flank of the Forty-second and Forty-fourth, which were standing in line close to the eastern margin of the Brussels road, they were so closely intermingled with the Brunswick Hussars and Belgians that the British at first mistook them for the Allied cavalry. A few old soldiers did indeed recognise them as enemies and open fire, but were sternly repressed by Pack; and the lancers, then wheeling about, charged down upon the rear of the British regiments. The Forty-second, having had a closer view of the cavalry than the Forty-fourth, realised their danger and began to form square, but, before the two flank-companies could run in to close the rear face, the lancers overtook them and, by the impetus of their charge, some few of them crashed into the mass of the battalion. For a moment there was some confusion. The senior officers sprang forward to rally the Highlanders, and in a few minutes the Colonel, second and third in command were dead. Then the flank-companies closed in, the square was completed, and the lancers, who had at first broken in, found themselves imprisoned and were bayoneted or taken to a man. The rest were driven off by the musketry of the remaining faces of the square with very heavy loss. Meanwhile the Colonel of the Forty-fourth, seeing that there was no time to form square, faced his rear rank about, and, waiting till the enemy was within close range, gave them a volley which emptied many saddles and effectually checked the rest. One little knot of daring Frenchmen, however, made a gallant dash for the colours, which were as gallantly defended; and, though the precious silk was actually

torn by the point of a French lance, not a fragment became a trophy to the enemy. Meanwhile the bulk of the lancers fled round the left flank of the battalion, receiving a volley from the light company as they passed, and were saluted by another discharge from the front rank before they finally disappeared. Let it be added that Colonel Galbois of the 6th French Lancers received a bullet in the chest during this encounter, but remained in the saddle and commanded his regiment two days later at Waterloo. Never did British soldiers bear themselves better, and never were they matched against nobler foemen. 1815. June 16.

On the whole, Ney's great attack had failed. He had been completely repulsed at every point to east of the Brussels road ; and his attempts to turn the British left flank had been steadily foiled by the Riflemen,[1] who, though driven by artillery from their little citadel at Thyle, continued to defend the Namur road with the greatest obstinacy. Only in Bossu Wood, which seems to have swallowed up the bulk of Jerome's division,[2] were the French making progress in spite of the thickness of the undergrowth. At this point indeed the resistance of the Netherlanders, as was pardonable in young troops which had been roughly handled, was beginning to grow weak ; and, as the Forty-second, Forty-fourth and Seventy-ninth had suffered very

[1] They had been reinforced by a Brunswick battalion, so raw that they could not be restrained from firing in all directions, and chiefly at their friends the Riflemen.

[2] It is exceedingly difficult to follow the movements of the French infantry in this action. Soye's brigade of Jerome's division was in Bossu Wood, but Bauduin's was free to advance between the wood and the Brussels road. Of Foy's division, one regiment of Jamin's brigade was covering the re-formation of Bachelu's division, but the other should have been advancing parallel with Bauduin's brigade; while Gauthier's brigade, albeit repulsed at the outset, should have been re-forming or re-formed in rear of Jamin. Apparently all movements of the infantry, except in the wood, were suspended during the attack of the cavalry ; presumably because the troops to east of the wood dared not advance until their left flank was cleared. It seems probable that these last were for long checked at the re-entrant angle where the northern end of the wood joins the road.

1815. June 16. heavily, being always under the fire of the French artillery, Wellington's situation was not of the securest. But, on the other hand, Ney also was in trouble. Soult's message had arrived reiterating the order to march upon the right flank of Blücher, and warning him that the fate of France was in his hands; and, as if in mockery, there came to his hands almost simultaneously a message carried by the chief of d'Erlon's staff, reporting that by the Emperor's order the 1st Corps was on its way to the battle-field of Ligny. Furious with rage, Ney sent a peremptory order to d'Erlon to return at once, and calling to him Kellermann, told him that the time was come for a great effort, and that he must hurl his cavalry at the British and gallop over them. Possibly the Marshal forgot that three out of four brigades of Kellermann's cavalry corps were at Liberchies, and only one brigade present at Frasnes,[1] and was under the impression that he was about to launch thirty-five hundred men upon the Allied line instead of eight hundred. Be that as it may, Kellermann demurred to the order, pointing out that a single brigade could do little against twenty-five thousand men. "What matter?" cried Ney. "Charge with whatever you have got. Gallop over them. I'll support you with all the cavalry that I have on the spot. Off with you! I say, off with you!"

Kellermann thereupon went to the head of Guiton's brigade and led them at a smart trot down the road; while the French batteries redoubled their fire upon the British infantry. Arrived at the summit of the plateau north of the Gemioncourt rivulet, he increased his front to a column of squadrons at twice deploying distance, and advanced at a gallop, hurrying his men into action before they could perceive their danger. The first attack was delivered on the east of the road

[1] Siborne says that the whole of L'Héritier's division was at Frasnes; Houssaye says that Guiton's brigade only was engaged, and this is confirmed by the reports both of Ney and of Kellermann. The latter indeed said that he did not know where L'Héritier's division was.

against the Forty-second and Forty-fourth, which, unable to see anything over the tall stalks of the rye in which they stood, were warned of the coming wrath by the inrush of their skirmishers. By this time both battalions had been reduced to little more than half of their original strength, but they formed two tiny squares with perfect steadiness and awaited the shock. The horses of the cuirassiers, after a rapid advance of over a mile, the latter part of the distance through thick corn as high as their withers, were doubtless somewhat blown; but their riders pressed them gallantly on almost to the points of the British bayonets. Then at last the red-coats drew trigger, and the leading squadron, broken and shattered by the fire, swerved away and disappeared. The other squadrons followed them in wave upon wave, only to meet with the same fate; and then, rallying, they renewed their onset upon two or more different faces of the squares, striving desperately but in vain to break into the hedge of bayonets. Some of the rear squadrons, meanwhile, dashed straight on by the road and parallel to it upon Quatre Bras and the Highlanders who were aligned to east of it. "Ninety-second, don't fire till I tell you!" shouted Wellington; and, waiting until the enemy were within thirty yards, he gave the word, when a withering volley sent the daring horsemen back in confusion. 1815. June 16.

The cuirassiers then retired to rally[1] under the shelter of the southern slope of the ridge, leaving the artillery to play upon the squares. Being reinforced by Piré's chasseurs and lancers, they presently renewed the attack. Once again there was a wild rush upon Quatre Bras and once again it was shattered by the

[1] It is extremely difficult to discover how many distinct attacks were delivered by the French cavalry. Houssaye treats them all as one; Siborne treats them as two; but judging from the narratives of the British regiments in *Waterloo Letters* I conceive that there were four, one of cuirassiers only, a second of cuirassiers supported by Piré's division, and a third and fourth, in one or both of which Lefebvre-Desnoëtte's division, or a part of it, took some share.

1815. Ninety-second, though a few brave horsemen made
June 16. their way into the village and one French officer was actually shot in rear of the Highlanders. But the principal onslaught was, as before, upon the Forty-second and Forty-fourth, which were fairly hemmed in and hidden by a mixed multitude of chasseurs, lancers, and cuirassiers, but nevertheless stood indomitably firm and refused to be broken. At last Picton, weary of waiting for the Netherlandish cavalry to come to the front, formed the First Royals and Twenty-eighth in one solid column of companies and advanced with them from the Namur road into the thick of the French horse upon the right of the Forty-fourth. Halting when he had reached a position from which he could bring a flanking fire to bear in favour of the Forty-fourth, he suddenly formed both regiments into one square; and, the Thirty-second and Seventy-ninth advancing likewise in the same formation to the south of the Royals and Twenty-eighth, the division made up a cluster of five squares drawn up more or less chequerwise for mutual support. At the same time Best's Hanoverian Brigade came forward to line the Namur road, which it did with three battalions, the fourth being pushed somewhat in advance. Against the new squares of red-coats the French turned with undiminished spirit and valour. Unable to see their enemy owing to the height of the rye, some of Piré's troopers fixed their lances in the ground close to the various squares, and upon these marks their comrades charged again and again with desperate but unavailing hardihood. There appears to have been little method in their attacks. There was no crash of squadron after squadron upon one given point, but an endless swirl of horsemen round and round the squares, which, though slightly thinned by occasional lance-thrusts, maintained eternally their deadly rolling fire. Scores of men and horses were brought down; and at length the French horsemen were again called off, to be rallied and re-formed.

Once more the French guns opened on the squares, and, worse still, the French sharp-shooters crept up and began to pour a destructive fire upon them. Perforce British skirmishers had to go forward to meet them; but with so little ammunition that they were at great disadvantage. At length the last round was exhausted, and Pack recalled the skirmishers to the squares ; but, before the order could be executed, the cuirassiers and lancers were upon them. Forming into columns of fours the little band charged through the horsemen, reached the Forty-fourth and lay down under the bayonets, the square being so hotly assailed at the moment that it could not open its ranks even to admit friends. The French commanders, evidently endeavouring to improve their tactics, marshalled their men for a simultaneous attack upon three sides of the square of the Royals and Twenty-eighth. Picton uttered not a word except " Twenty-eighth, remember Egypt," and the charge was beaten off, as had been all previous charges, with heavy loss to the enemy. Thereupon the old disorder began afresh, and the attack degenerated into a confusion of galloping swarms in and out of the squares. At one point, however, it was at last successful, for a party of lancers surprised Best's advanced Hanoverian battalion when deployed in line, and practically destroyed it. Heartened by this victory the lancers tried to cross the Namur road, but were driven back in confusion by the fire of the remaining battalions which were concealed in a ditch by the highway. Then for the third time the French cavalry was drawn off to re-form ; and the red-coats were left to the mercy of the cannon and sharp-shooters of the enemy. 1815. June 16.

The Forty-second and Forty-fourth were now formed into a single square under the personal command of Pack ; but, having little ammunition left, they and the Seventy-ninth were reduced almost to the limits of their endurance. Happily at this moment came up two brigades of Alten's division, Colin

1815. June 16. Halkett's British and Kielmansegge's Hanoverians, the former of which was directed by Picton to move down through Bossu Wood and fall upon the French left, and the latter to reinforce the Riflemen on the extreme Allied left. Entering the wood, Halkett encountered an aide-de-camp sent by Pack, who represented that there were few cartridges left in his brigade, and that unless speedily supported he could no longer hold his position. Detaching the Sixty-ninth to the help of Pack, Halkett led the rest of his brigade into the wood just in time to stop the Brunswickers, who were on the point of abandoning it. The Brunswickers were not without excuse, for the bulk of the Netherlanders were by this time streaming away in flight along the road to Nivelles.[1] By a few hard words, aided by the presence of his own brigade, Halkett induced them to rally in a ditch which ran across the narrowest part of the wood, and galloped forward to the ground overlooking Gemioncourt to reconnoitre. Perceiving below him a large corps of cavalry forming by detachments, and seeing the French cannon reopen fire, he despatched an aide-de-camp to warn the Sixty-ninth to form square, and received an answer that his orders were obeyed. The French cavalry, reinforced apparently by Lefebvre-Desnoëtte's division,[2] was in fact massing for a fourth and final attack which was to be supported by infantry. Bossu Wood had by

[1] In spite of the statements of Le Bas and Wommersom, the concurrence of testimony as to the flight of the Netherlanders at this time is so strong that I cannot overlook it. The private Journal of Colonel James Stanhope who came up with the 1st Guards says: "Soon after passing Nivelles we met a great many wounded men going to the rear with ten times their number to take care of them, which did not strike me as a good specimen of the first trial of our Allies." Such a witness had no object in saying what was untrue, and he confirms the general reports of other British writers.

[2] Or by some part of it. See Houssaye, *Waterloo*, p. 214, note. I do not see how the French cavalry could have come forward again without reinforcement: particularly as we are told that the cuirassiers took part in every one of the attacks, and only two regiments of cuirassiers were present.

this time been nearly cleared of the Allied battalions, so that Bauduin's, Jamin's and Gauthier's brigades were able to advance, some of them in the open, most of them, it should seem, within the wood itself; and Ney had ordered two batteries of artillery to advance along a ride close to the eastern margin of the wood and running parallel with it, so as to emerge at the right moment from the wood into the plain and prepare the way for the onslaught of the infantry. 1815. June 16.

Wellington had been temporarily absent from Quatre Bras when Halkett came up, but sent an aide-de-camp to ask if Sir Colin could follow the original instructions given by Picton. He was answered that it seemed unsafe to leave the Brunswickers unsupported until more troops should come up. Halkett's brigade was therefore disposed, apparently, so as at once to take pressure off Picton's right and to maintain the defence of the north-eastern angle of the wood. The whole were echeloned,[1] it seems, to west of the Brussels road, the Sixty-ninth, together with two guns of Lloyd's battery which had just arrived, foremost, and the Thirtieth next to them. As they reached their appointed ground they began to form square, in obedience to Halkett's warning, when the Prince of Orange galloped up and asked them what they were about, as there was no fear of any further attack by cavalry. Pursuant to the Prince's command the two battalions deployed into line, and the two guns were presently recalled to join the rest of their battery just south of the farm of Quatre Bras. Cleeves's and Kuhlmann's batteries of the German Legion appeared shortly afterwards, whereupon Lloyd's took post on the west side of the road, Cleeves's on the east side, and Kuhlmann's midway between them.

Shortly afterwards the French cavalry came up the road to their fourth attack, and catching sight of

[1] It is most difficult to discover the position of Halkett's brigade. Amid all the libraries that have been written on the campaign of Waterloo it is almost impossible to ascertain so simple a point as this.

1815. June 16. the Thirty-third, which was moving in column of companies through the rye on the highest point of the plateau, galloped upon them. The battalion formed square, whereupon the baffled horsemen, perceiving the Sixty-ninth in a hollow below, wheeled round and charged down upon them. The Sixty-ninth being, through the folly of the Prince of Orange, deployed, made shift to throw itself into square and, apparently, would have succeeded had not the captain of the grenadier-company wheeled the two right-hand companies about in order to fire, instead of closing the face of the square. In a moment the horsemen were in the middle of them. The two companies were destroyed, the rest were partly broken, the only remaining colour of the battalion was captured, one hundred and fifty men were killed and wounded, and the remainder saved themselves by taking refuge under the bayonets of the Forty-second and Forty-fourth.[1] Flushed with success, the cavalry turned upon the Thirtieth, which, however, having had time to form square, beat them off with a steadiness which earned warm praise from Picton. Some of the cuirassiers then essayed a last desperate attempt upon Quatre Bras, but were shattered to pieces by Cleeves's guns; and the survivors fled in headlong panic along the Brussels road, infecting with their fright some of the infantry as they passed, and carrying dismay even to Charleroi and beyond.[2]

Nevertheless the danger of Wellington's situation was never greater than at this moment. The Sixty-ninth was for the time dispersed; the Seventy-third, upon the sight of the cavalry approaching them, had

[1] The Colonel, who was killed at Waterloo, told Captain Rudyard of Lloyd's battery that the battalion was saved by the fire of a battalion of Guards (*Waterloo Letters*, p. 231); but it is, I think, impossible that the Guards were so early on the field.

[2] I conceive that these fugitives were the 3rd Léger of Bauduin's brigade and possibly the 93rd Line of Gauthier's brigade. The 3rd lost not a single officer killed or wounded, and the 93rd only two officers.

run into the thicket;[1] and now the French batteries concealed in the wood opened fire with deadly effect upon the Thirty-third. After enduring the trial for a short time the colonel deployed the battalion, and, covered by a regiment of Brunswick cavalry, moved towards a battalion of Brunswick infantry which was heavily engaged in the re-entrant angle of the wood near Quatre Bras. A cry rose that the cavalry was again approaching, and the Thirty-third rushed into the wood and dispersed. The Thirtieth appears to have altered its formation and stood firm,[2] but, with this exception, Halkett's brigade was for the time out of action ; and the French cavalry returned to its old task of rushing round the squares of Pack's brigade. These still held their ground with noble tenacity, but Bossu Wood was practically lost to the Allies for the moment. Its eastern border was full of British troops, but these were dispersed in the undergrowth, some of them no doubt glad to find themselves in a safe place and unwilling to leave it, but all, including the officers, absolutely lost, without an idea in which direction they were moving or ought to move, how they were to assemble themselves and what they should do when assembled. The French, on the other hand, were pushing on to the Nivelles road with every prospect of turning Wellington's right ; and, if they should succeed in doing this, the day would be lost. 1815. June 16.

Happily at this moment the division of Guards, followed by two Brunswick battalions and a Brunswick battery, approached Quatre Bras, much fatigued after a march of fifteen hours. The Prince of Orange, in a high state of excitement, galloped out to meet them, and encountering Lord Saltoun at the head of the light companies of the First Guards, ordered him to strike south-eastward into the western side of Bossu Wood. Saltoun, unable to see any enemy, asked

[1] Morris. *Recollections of Military Service*, p. 197.
[2] *Life of Sir William Gomm*, p. 355.

1815. where the French were to be found. "If you do not
June 16. like to undertake it," answered the foolish Prince, excitedly, "I'll find some one who will." Saltoun, who had served with distinction through the campaigns of Coruña, Walcheren, Vitoria, the Pyrenees, and Southern France, quietly repeated his question and, upon obtaining a reasonable reply, formed his line of skirmishers and entered the wood. Guided only by the sound of the enemy's musketry, these pressed forward steadily, while the Prince of Orange, utterly ignorant of his business, hurried the succeeding companies in pairs, as they came up, close on the heels of Saltoun. Unable to see anything, these supporting companies could only fire where they could hear firing, and this undoubtedly caused some loss among Saltoun's men. However, their advance certainly checked that of the French on the western side of the wood; and meanwhile Lloyd's battery, moving forward from Quatre Bras, engaged the two French batteries on the eastern margin of the wood. After a murderous duel which cost Lloyd several men and two complete teams, he succeeded not only in silencing them but in driving back a French column which attempted to debouch from the trees in that quarter. But farther to the north two French columns, following not far upon the heels of the defeated cuirassiers, had turned north-eastward out of the wood upon Quatre Bras, one of them occupying the house and garden of La Bergerie. Sir Edward Barnes therefore placed himself at the head of the Ninety-second, which charged the head of the leading column and drove it back into the garden. Under a murderous flanking fire from the second column the Highlanders then assaulted the building and its enclosures, cleared the enemy from it after a desperate encounter, and fairly drove the French down before them along the margin between wood and road until they came under the fire of the French guns posted on the hill opposite Gemioncourt. Then at last they withdrew into the wood for

shelter, whence they retired, with ranks terribly thinned, to Quatre Bras. 1815. June 16.

Not long afterwards the Second battalion of the First Guards, after not much less than an hour of confused fighting, penetrated to the extreme south-western angle of Bossu Wood, with its companies naturally much intermixed and its order in great measure lost. By that time the bulk of Halkett's brigade had been rallied and reposted level with the Gemioncourt Brook, with the two new Brunswick battalions somewhat in advance of them ; and, when the Guards emerged into the open ground, they could see the Thirty-third behind the shelter of a hedge to their left rear. They were however received by so heavy a fire of musketry and artillery when they showed themselves, that they withdrew again to a hollow formed by a rill that runs north and south through the wood, though even then they suffered some loss from heavy branches cut off by the French round-shot. Here, being joined by their Third battalion, the First Guards advanced again into the open between the wood and the Brussels road, having rallied to them a number of lost men of Halkett's brigade, while Byng's brigade came and began to form up on their right. The deployment was in process and the Brunswick battalion was moving down to form on the left of Maitland's brigade, when the French cuirassiers made a dash upon the left flank of the First Guards. The men instantly ran back to line the ditch at the edge of the wood while the Brunswickers formed square ; and the cuirassiers, met by the fire of the Guards in front and of the Brunswickers in flank, were driven back with very heavy loss. Nevertheless all Maitland's attempts to make further progress and to storm the French battery were frustrated by the steadiness of the French infantry. On the Allied left a resolute attempt of Bachelu to turn Wellington's left was foiled, after much hard fighting, by the Rifles, with the support of two

1815. June 16. Hanoverian battalions; and soon after sunset all French attacks ceased, and their cavalry vanished from the ground. Ney had, in fact, withdrawn all his troops to Frasnes; and at nine o'clock, as the darkness thickened, Wellington established his line of picquets from Petit Pierrepont, through Gemioncourt to Pireaumont, over against the outposts of Ney. Thus was recovered, after a struggle of six hours, the original position (the farm of Grand Pierrepont excepted) which had been occupied by Perponcher in the morning.

Few engagements are more difficult to follow and to understand than the battle of Quatre Bras. It is impossible, in the first place, to say definitely what numbers of the Allies were in action at any given moment after the first hour or even half-hour. Fresh troops were constantly coming up from beginning to end of the fight, and, though many authors have tried to settle the hour at which this or that brigade or division arrived on the ground, the data upon which they have reckoned are so uncertain that no reliance can be placed upon them. The hours stated by various actors who have left narratives of the struggle are, again, so contradictory that any endeavour to reconcile them is hopeless. It is also extremely hard to discover exactly what force of cavalry was at the disposal of Ney. Some narratives[1] on the side of the Allies state that Roussel's cuirassiers were present at the end of the day, but did not charge; and indeed the ubiquity of the cuirassiers, as pourtrayed by the concurrence of many English narrators, would seem to demand the presence of more than one brigade of this particular description of cavalry. The constant mention of lancers also would seem to imply that those of Lefebvre-Desnoëttes as well as those of Piré were among the

[1] *E.g.* Siborne's and the French *Témoin oculaire*. See *The Battle of Waterloo, by a Near Observer* (10th ed. 1817), p. 129. Siborne also credits Ney with the whole of Héritier's cavalry division instead of with Guiton's brigade only.

squadrons which harassed Picton's battalions through so many hours. Yet, according to the list of casualties, not a single officer of Roussel's brigade and only two officers of Lefebvre-Desnoëttes's command were touched on the 16th of June. The height of the rye-stalks, the veiling of the French right by Hutte Wood as of the Allied right by Bossu Wood, and the undulations of the ground evidently made accurate observation impracticable. The only certain fact that can be adduced is that Ney began the fight with about fifteen thousand infantry, eighteen hundred cavalry, and thirty-eight guns against about seven thousand infantry, with no cavalry and sixteen guns ; and that when the battle ended Ney's force had probably been augmented by more than a thousand horse, whereas Wellington's had been swelled by the arrival, at different periods, of some twenty-two thousand men and forty-two guns. Of course the value of the troops that from first to last came under Wellington's command during the day varied very greatly, but, so far as bare numbers go, the figures are roughly as above stated. That Wellington was in constant peril was due to the facts, first, that every successive reinforcement as it came up had to bear the full weight of the French attack, which had already overwhelmed its predecessors ; and secondly, that he had no British cavalry present. For these disadvantages no one can be held responsible but himself.

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The conduct of the troops of all nations in the field, without exception, varied greatly. Taking first the Netherlanders, to whom without dispute belongs the credit of occupying and defending the position of Quatre Bras in the first instance, it appears that the 27th Chasseurs, the 5th Militia and the 2nd Nassau Light Infantry, all three of them, lost heavily in killed and wounded ; but of the wounded a very large proportion were but slightly hurt, and the 27th and the 5th both show a discreditable number of men missing. The losses of the seven remaining battalions, so far as

1815. June 16. they are returned, were slight—indeed, except in one instance, so trifling as to prove that those units took only a minute share in the action.[1] On the other hand, Van Merlen's two cavalry regiments seem to have behaved better, though here again the proportion of slightly wounded is unduly large; and Stevenaart's battery of artillery, which lost all its officers and fifty killed or wounded,[2] must have behaved not only well but heroically. The casualties of the Netherlanders, all told, amounted to a thousand and fifty-eight, of which nearly three hundred were missing and nearly four hundred slightly wounded, leaving a balance of only four to five hundred killed or seriously hurt. For a total force of nine thousand present, most of them for the entire day, such a tale of casualties does not suggest very strenuous resistance or very serious loss; and, in spite of all that has been written in defence of their countrymen by Netherlandish authors, the contemporary judgment which threw the brunt of the day's work upon the British and Germans must stand as confirmed. Nevertheless it would be unfair to judge too harshly troops so lately raised for a sovereign so newly appointed; and at all events the highest praise must be given to the Netherlandish Generals, Constant and Perponcher. The like cannot be said of the Prince of Orange, who succeeded in destroying one British battalion, and did his best to destroy three more. His courage was unquestionable, but, considered as a general officer, he can be described only as a meddlesome and mischievous encumbrance.

Of the Brunswickers, those that were rallied by Halkett were not seen at their best, but the rest appear

[1] One battalion of militia is omitted from the return altogether, which, unless it were dissolved, is rather remarkable.

[2] The figure given by Le Bas and Wommersom in their text (i. 507) is 1 officer and 28 men killed, 2 officers and 83 men wounded, making 114 casualties out of 119 present. This does not agree with the return printed in vol. iii. 201, where the figures are 1 officer and 6 men killed, 2 officers and 13 men severely wounded, 3 officers and 25 men slightly wounded, 14 men missing. Total casualties 63.

to have conducted themselves well, indeed, for young soldiers, admirably. Their losses amounted to nearly eight hundred and fifty, one quarter of them missing ; two battalions having each about one hundred casualties and a third close upon two hundred. The Hanoverians also displayed commendable steadiness in spite of the misfortune which overtook one of their battalions. Their casualties well exceeded six hundred. Of the British the battalions of Picton's division rose to the highest level of excellence attained by British infantry, their constancy under repeated devastation by artillery and incessant attacks of cavalry being superb. The Guards also maintained worthily their high reputation, being thrown into action at a very trying moment after a march of twenty-six miles, with shaken troops on every side of them. The casualties among them and the battalions of Picton's division were heavy. In the First Guards the Second and Third battalions lost over five hundred out of two thousand rank and file. In Pack's brigade, the Royals had over two hundred killed and wounded, and Forty-second and Ninety-second each over two hundred and eighty, representing in the case of the two last not far from one-half of their numbers. In Kempt's brigade the Thirty-second had very nearly two hundred casualties, and the Seventy-ninth just over three hundred. Halkett's brigade, excepting the Sixty-ninth, escaped more lightly ; but it must be frankly confessed that as a body they behaved ill, though Halkett himself selected only the Thirty-third for reproach. But they were raw young soldiers, remnants of Graham's force, and were hardly equal to the severe trial of remaining stationary under the fire of cannon, varied only by occasional charges of cavalry ; and the Prince of Orange's disastrous interference with their formation was not calculated to inspire them with confidence. Nevertheless, their behaviour was a blot upon the general conduct of the red-coats. The total losses of the British amounted to close upon

1815. June 16.

1815. twenty-three hundred, among whom the missing did
June 16. not amount to forty. The casualties of the entire force of the Allies reached the total of forty-eight hundred exactly.

The losses of the French are stated at forty-one to forty-two hundred, which is probably not far from correct. The distribution of loss, so far as can be gathered from the only source of information—the casualty-list of officers—was almost startlingly unequal. In Bachelu's division there fell altogether thirty-six officers, of whom fourteen belonged to the 61st of the Line, five to the 72nd, and seventeen to the 108th. On the whole this division suffered severely. In Jerome's division, the number was the same, thirty-six, but of these twenty-seven belonged to the 1st of the Line and six to the 2nd, while in Bauduin's brigade only three officers were killed or wounded in the 1st Light and not one in the 3rd Light. From this it is tolerably certain that Bauduin's brigade was but slightly engaged, and that the 3rd Light ran away in the panic caused by the flight of the cuirassiers. In Foy's division eight officers only fell in Gauthier's brigade, whereas in Jamin's no fewer than twenty-nine were killed and wounded in the 4th Light alone, besides fifteen of the 100th of the Line. Foy states his losses at seven to eight hundred, but it is manifest that the brunt fell on one regiment principally ; and, when one reflects on the small share of the work which was evidently done by Bauduin, one cannot but be filled with admiration for the persistent gallantry of the remainder of the French infantry and in particular of the 1st Line and the 4th Light. Not all the endeavours of the Guards could avail to recover more ground than had been held by the Netherlanders in the morning ; and this is no small tribute to the tenacity of their enemies. Not less remarkable was the inexhaustible courage and energy of Piré's lancers and of Guiton's cuirassiers, who suffered terribly in their attacks upon the British infantry. Here, how-

ever, there is again an irregularity in the distribution of the casualties which is difficult to explain. The 5th Lancers lost ten officers, the 6th eleven ; but the 1st Chasseurs of the same division lost only two and the 6th Chasseurs not one. In Guiton's brigade there fell of the 8th Cuirassiers alone thirteen officers, but of the 11th Cuirassiers only four. Lastly, in Lefebvre-Desnoëttes' division two officers of the Lancers of the Guard were wounded, but not one of the Chasseurs. The conclusion would seem to be that Ney at no time threw the whole of his forces into the fight, which is one more testimony to the bravery and endeavour of those that were actually engaged. 1815. June 16.

A great deal has been written, after the event, of Ney's shortcomings in the morning of the 16th, his failure to assemble his infantry betimes at Quatre Bras, and his omission to ascertain the strength of the Allies by a reconnaissance in force. Such criticism is easy, but it takes no account of the false view of the entire situation which had been held up to the Marshal by his master Napoleon. Setting aside his unsurpassable moral and physical courage, Ney had never been much more than an exceedingly skilful tactician in the field, being content with his chief's direction in higher matters. He had only joined the army after the actual opening of the campaign, consequently he knew nothing about his command, and little more than had been vouchsafed to him in Napoleon's first letter about the plan of operations. The Emperor had given him plainly to understand that the road to Brussels was open, and probably the road to Gembloux also. Ney naturally presumed that his chief knew best, and he no doubt laid himself out for a quiet day in which to settle down to his work before the march to Brussels at nightfall. Napoleon had in fact fallen into the error which he had so frequently rebuked in his subordinates—*il se faisait des tableaux*, he had conjured up imaginary pictures of the situation. He had made up his mind that both of the Allied armies were

1815. retreating, when he discovered first that the Prussians
June 16. were standing firm and ready to accept battle. For this he was more or less prepared. He had his two wings and his reserve ready for such a contingency, and welcomed the opportunity of annihilating one army while in isolation from the other. Once again he conjured up a picture of forty thousand Prussians only before him, whereas there proved to be eighty thousand. For this also he was in a measure ready, for he had announced that, when necessary, he should weaken one wing to strengthen the other. He accordingly proceeded first to summon Ney's entire force to him, and meanwhile took d'Erlon's corps from him bodily. But, as the proceedings of the day developed, it became apparent that the French army was saddled, not with one pitched battle, but with two. Both wings were busily engaged at one and the same time, which was contrary to all of Napoleon's principles and plans, and the reserve was reduced practically to d'Erlon's corps, which was needed and clamoured for equally by Napoleon and by Ney.

The not unnatural result was that d'Erlon spent the day marching backwards and forwards between Ligny and Quatre Bras, and did not finally settle down at Frasnes until night had put an end to the fighting everywhere. His corps thrown in upon either battle-field would undoubtedly have secured a decided success for the Emperor ; and d'Erlon has been much blamed for obeying Ney's command to return from St. Amand. We have seen enough of this officer during the campaign in the Pyrenees to know that he was not a man to commit himself upon any side so long as he could find a safe way in the middle ; and it is therefore not surprising that he should have acted as he did. But the key to his irresolution and to Ney's apathy was undoubtedly Napoleon's misjudgment of the whole situation. Napoleon's first word on the 16th was, practically, " There will be no fighting to-day " ; his second, " I shall fight a battle to-day, and shall need all

my reserves to make it decisive" ; whereas events proved that he was destined to fight two severe battles, one of them successful, the other unsuccessful, but neither decisive. A little more tactical skill on the part of Blücher would have made both of them unsuccessful, and then his plan of campaign would have been ruined. Even as it was, his losses—certainly not far short of thirteen thousand men—incurred as they were for no final result, threatened to work havoc with his operations, for it was certain that two more such engagements would bring his army to a standstill. Altogether the 16th of June was a bad day for Napoleon, and chiefly through his own fault. The fact is that he overrated the effect of his prestige, and omitted from his calculations the important factor that the two generals opposed to him were not afraid of him. Still less did he bethink him that one of the two was a commander whom his own generals were afraid to meet. But for the unpleasant memories of Peninsular battles Ney would probably have attacked earlier, and taken Quatre Bras before Picton's division could have arrived in time to save it. The events of the 16th of June turned, it may be said, chiefly on the singular circumstance that, at any rate for that day, Wellington's name inspired greater awe into the French than Napoleon's into the Allies.

1815. June 16.

CHAPTER XXV

1815. June 16. The armies of Napoleon, Wellington and Ney were all of them too much exhausted to move on the evening of the 16th; but the Prussians had no choice but to retire. Some of their Ist and IInd Corps had been very severely handled and were to some extent demoralised. Fugitives swarmed along the road to Liége, and, though many were turned back by Prussian officers, it was reckoned that from eight to ten thousand forsook their colours and pursued their way in no sort of order. Some hundreds of Prussian marauders and bad characters, indeed, even found their way to Brussels, where, among other depredations, they stole several horses belonging to British officers.[1] On the other hand, the actual losses in action did not exceed six thousand, of which only a small proportion were prisoners, and the guns captured by the French little exceeded twenty. Two of Ziethen's brigades and one of Thielmann's had firmly arrested the French advances at Brye and before Sombreffe ; and Thielmann, whose corps had been little engaged, finally stood fast about Sombreffe till past ten o'clock. Gneisenau, who was left in command owing to Blücher's injuries, had at first given provisional orders for retreat northward to Tilly ; but he was much inclined to fall back upon Liége, and it was only after a warm discussion between him, Blücher and Grolmann that he at last gave way to them, and early in the morning of the 17th issued the

[1] Jackson. *Notes and Reminiscences of a Staff Officer*, pp. 35-36.

final command for retreat to Wavre. This decision has been rightly styled the turning point of the campaign, and, so far as Blücher and Grolmann were concerned, it certainly signified their fixed intention to stand by their Allies. Gneisenau was influenced by no such motive ; and indeed the movement by no means necessarily bound him to co-operation with Wellington. A retreat upon Liége, if carried out by the Roman road, would not have been the safest of operations with a Napoleon within striking distance, whereas by retiring northward to Louvain he could strike a second and far securer line of communication with the Rhine Provinces by Maastricht and Aix-la-Chapelle. Head-quarters for the night were fixed at Mellery, and at daybreak of the 17th the whole army marched upon Wavre, where Pirch I.'s corps took up its bivouac to south at Ste. Anne and Aisemont, Ziethen's to west at Bierges, and Thielmann's to north at La Bavette. Bülow at the same time was called in to Dion-le-Mont, about three miles south-east of Wavre, where he arrived at ten o'clock at night. Thus the Prussian army effected its retirement without molestation, and on the night of the 17th was concentrated in full force and by no means in bad heart. The only thing which the Prussian staff had omitted to do was to inform Wellington of their retreat.

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At Quatre Bras the British cavalry continued to stream in through the evening and night; and by daybreak of the 17th all six of the brigades, one regiment excepted, had arrived, bringing the total of the force up to forty-five thousand men. Two aides-de-camp had been sent to Wellington by Gneisenau in the course of the 16th, the first of whom was wounded near Pireaumont and never delivered his message, while the second brought the news that, though no great success was to be expected as the outcome of the fight, the Prussians hoped to hold their ground till nightfall. Relying upon this assurance the Duke rested at Genappe for the night, returning to Quatre Bras soon after

1815. daylight. There was some firing among the most
June 17. advanced skirmishers upon both sides, which after a time died away. As there was still no information from the Prussians and it was therefore uncertain whether the next march was to be in advance or in retreat, Wellington soon after six o'clock sent a staff officer, Sir Alexander Gordon, escorted by a troop of the Tenth Hussars, towards Ligny. This party, after driving in a French picquet about Marbais, turned north and, meeting General Ziethen, who was directing the movements of the Prussian rear-guard, ascertained from him the truth respecting the events of the 16th. When Gordon returned with his report, the Duke looked meaningly at Müffling, who, conscious of his own good faith, explained that the Prussian aide-de-camp, who had been wounded at Pireaumont, had probably been sent to convey this very news. Wellington, instantly pacified, proceeded to discuss what should be done. At present he knew only that Blücher had retreated upon Wavre and that Bülow's corps had not been engaged ; and the only course appeared to be to retire to some position level with Wavre, and to regulate his future operations by the reports that should reach him from Blücher. After some hesitation the Duke decided to let the men cook and eat their breakfasts before moving ; and at nine o'clock a Prussian officer arrived to report Blücher's resolution of concentrating at Wavre, and to ascertain Wellington's intentions. The Duke answered that he should retire to Mont St. Jean, where, if supported by one Prussian corps, he should accept battle.

The retreat of Pirch I. and Ziethen, astonishing to say, was unobserved on the French left ; but on the right Pajol's patrols reported at half-past two in the morning that the Prussians were in motion, and Pajol without delay sent two regiments in pursuit along the road to Namur. Stragglers and lost units, including a stray squadron and a stray battery, induced the French hussars to follow this false track, and at five

o'clock Pajol reported definitely that the enemy was retreating along the road to Namur and Liége. Pursuing his way for some hours, however, he began to doubt if he were right, and at noon, upon the information of some peasants, he turned northwards by a by-road towards Louvain. Berton's brigade of Exelmans's cavalry corps also followed the road to Namur for a short distance, but soon turned towards Gembloux, where at nine o'clock in the morning it came upon Thielmann's whole corps halted for rest. Exelmans himself presently came up, but contented himself with watching the Prussians and sending a despatch, rather late, to report that he was doing so. 1815. June 17.

Meanwhile, at about seven o'clock, the Emperor received Pajol's message above mentioned ; and nearly at the same time his aide-de-camp, Flahault, returned from Quatre Bras and gave an account of what had passed there. Deciding not to issue any definite orders, Napoleon gave Ney notice that he was proceeding to Brye, and that, if there were any trouble with the British army, he would attack it in flank while Ney assailed it in front, so as to compel it to yield up Quatre Bras. The rest of the day, he added, would be spent in collecting stragglers and replenishing stores. At nine o'clock, accordingly, he left Fleurus for the battle-field of Ligny, where he inspected his troops and visited the wounded. Here letters reached him from Ney, from Pajol and from Exelmans. The first set forth that the Allied troops at Quatre Bras were an army and not a mere rear-guard ; the second reported the capture of guns and prisoners at Mazy on the Namur road ; and the third announced that Exelmans was marching with his cavalry corps upon Gembloux in pursuit of the Prussians.[1] Thereupon Napoleon decided to divide his army, and delivered his

[1] Houssaye : *Waterloo*, p. 232. I think it too much to assume, as Houssaye does, that Exelmans's first report announced that the Prussians were at Gembloux in force. This first report does not exist and can only be reconstructed, by implication, from the text of a second report, which, in my opinion, warrants no such construction.

1815. final instructions to that end. To Grouchy he handed
June 17. over Teste's division of Lobau's corps, Vandamme's and Gérard's corps complete, and the four cavalry divisions of Pajol and Exelmans, with instructions to proceed with them to Gembloux. From that centre the Marshal was to explore in the direction of Namur and Maastricht, pursue the enemy and discover his movements. Napoleon himself would meanwhile proceed to Quatre Bras ; and the line of communications, which was to be well guarded, would be by the paved road to Namur. In any case, Grouchy was to keep his infantry in a compact body with several avenues of retreat. " It is important," so ran one sentence, " to discover what Blücher and Wellington mean to do, and whether they intend to unite their armies to cover Brussels and Liége by trying their luck in another battle."[1]

According to the purport of these instructions, as I read them, Grouchy's mission was to be one principally of reconnaissance and exploration. The Emperor repeats twice in the course of a few lines that he wishes to penetrate his enemy's intentions. With this object, chiefly, as the text appears to indicate, Grouchy was to pursue the Prussians, and, though he was to start at Gembloux, he was directed particularly to make good the ground towards Namur, and indeed to cause that line to be occupied by National Guards in case it had been evacuated by the Prussians. This shows plainly that Napoleon was still wedded to his original idea, confirmed as it was to some extent by Pajol's reports, that Blücher had retreated eastwards. In this case Grouchy might have to deal with a strong rear-guard at Gembloux ; and it was, apparently, to

[1] There are various readings of this order, in some of which the words " or Liége " are omitted. In yet another version the sentence runs, " It is important to discover what the Prussians mean to do ; either they are separating themselves from the English or intend to try their luck in another battle." I follow the text given by Houssaye, pp. 236, 237, which is drawn from the Archives de la Guerre at Paris.

meet this contingency that he had been entrusted with a force of over thirty thousand men. Further, Napoleon evidently contemplated the chance of his meeting with the entire Prussian army, or at any rate with a superior force, otherwise he would not have added the admonition that many avenues of retreat should be kept open for the infantry. The possibility that Wellington and Blücher might unite their armies and fight a battle to cover Brussels and Liége is treated in extremely obscure language. The only line on which a single battle could be fought to cover both places would be that of the previous day, Quatre Bras and Sombreffe, or perhaps Quatre Bras and Gembloux. Did Napoleon expect Wellington and Blücher each of them to assemble his whole army (which so far neither of them had done) and to fight another action at Quatre Bras and Gembloux, at which points the pair of them were said to be massed in strength? It must be presumed that he did, for, if the two were to fight united in a single array, they could only do so safely by converging north-west and north-east; and not a word was said to Grouchy about exploring at all in a northerly direction or west of Gembloux. 1815. June 17.

Such vagueness of instruction can only be engendered by uncertainty and confusion of thought. What Napoleon expected and hoped was that the main body of the Prussians was already withdrawing to Liége by way of Tongres and Namur, and that Grouchy would break down their rear-guard and drive it in the same direction, following it up and keeping it at a distance, while the Emperor himself should fall upon the British. He gave special injunctions that frequent intelligence should be sent to him in case he should be mistaken; but he did not give Grouchy to understand that the right wing was to act as right-flank-guard to the left wing and reserve, while the Emperor dealt with the British army. It is true that a commander cannot always reveal to a subordinate all that is in his mind: that must depend on various considerations, personal

1815. and other. If Napoleon had manifested his true
June 17. meaning to Grouchy, the latter might have asked how he was to fend off ninety thousand men with thirty thousand ; and the question would have been an extremely awkward one. Yet, as it seems to me, this is the gist of the whole matter, that Grouchy did not know what his master wanted, because his master either did not know or dared not tell him. The truth is that the result of the two actions on the 16th amounted to a defeat for Napoleon, and left him not indeed without resource—his genius was too great for that—but with insuperable difficulties before him.

Meanwhile at nine o'clock Wellington had issued his orders for retreat. The Second British Division, part of the Fourth British Division and the Third Netherlandish Division were to march to Waterloo from Nivelles, and the Second Netherlandish Division from Quatre Bras, at once. The remainder of the Fourth Division was to halt at Braine-le-Comte. The rest of the infantry was to assemble to right and left of the position, holding its former ground only with its picquets, and at one o'clock the cavalry was to form in rear of the position in three lines to cover the march of the infantry. The corps of Prince Frederick of Orange was to retire from Enghien to Hal in the evening, and the Fourth Division (less Mitchell's brigade) was to move likewise to Hal in the morning of the 18th.

The movement, screened by all the skill of which Wellington was master, began before ten o'clock, and continued quietly, though the Duke watched the front with anxiety until the last of the battalions marched off, when he said, "Well, there is the last of the infantry gone, and I don't care now." Ney throughout this time remained perfectly inactive, which was, in the circumstances, not surprising. He had been placed in a false position on the 16th; he had suffered heavy loss for no commensurate object in consequence; he had been left all night unaware of the issue of the

battle of Ligny ; and, of the letters received by him from Napoleon's head-quarters on the 17th, one expressed displeasure and reproach for the isolation of d'Erlon's corps, while the other held out the prospect of a quiet day to be devoted to re-equipment and to the replenishment of stores. To this it must be added that the discipline of the French army was extremely bad, and that the soldiers had fallen at once into the evil ways, taught to them by many campaigns, of marauding and plunder. Even the Emperor's magazines had not been spared, and the Guard had been among the worst offenders. The Provost Marshal, in fact, resigned his appointment on the 17th in despair over his impotence to set matters right.[1] After a hard and discouraging day's fighting in weather of intense heat, the men had probably indemnified themselves by dispersing during the night in search of such luxuries as were to be obtained by pillage ; and it is reasonable to suppose that, until late in the forenoon, the ranks of many regiments were much depleted. However that may be, there was up to one o'clock no sign of life on the French side at Quatre Bras ; and Napoleon, who had arrived at about that hour at Marbais, losing patience made his way thither in person with Lobau's corps, the Guard, Domont's and Subervie's divisions of light cavalry and Milhaud's division of cuirassiers. His advanced parties struck against those of the British cavalry shortly afterwards, whereupon Napoleon deployed his force into two lines, the cavalry in front with the artillery massed in the centre, and the infantry in rear, and sent a message to Ney to advance immediately. 1815. June 17.

Wellington had for some hours past taken up his station close to Quatre Bras, sometimes seated on the ground reading and laughing over the English newspapers, sometimes riding a short distance forward to sweep the ground with his telescope. He was much astonished that the enemy made no movement, and

[1] Houssaye, *Waterloo*, p. 80.

1815. seemed to think it within the bounds of possibility
June 17. that they might have retreated. The air was intensely hot and oppressively still. Angry thunderclouds were heaping themselves up to northward ; and altogether it was such a day as saps human energy and makes even the most active man hope inwardly for peace and quiet. Wellington was undeceived by the sight of a mass of cuirsasiers forming alongside the Namur road about two miles away—evidently the first step in Napoleon's manœuvre of deployment. At about two o'clock the cuirassiers were observed to mount and to ride forward, preceded by lancers ; the advanced parties of the British horse both in the front and on the left flank became engaged ; and presently a picquet of the Eighteenth Hussars came trotting in, without loss, along the Namur road. Wellington then left the conduct of the retreat to Lord Uxbridge, giving orders that anything like a serious engagement must, if possible, be avoided. Uxbridge accordingly directed the retirement to be made in three columns. The two heavy brigades of Somerset and Ponsonby, together with the Seventh Hussars and Twenty-third Light Dragoons, formed the centre, which was to take the Brussels road ; Vandeleur's and Vivian's brigades composed the left or eastern column, which was to move by Baisy and Thy ; Dörnberg's brigade and the Fifteenth Hussars made up the right column, which was to pass the Thy rivulet above Genappe. Vivian's brigade, being on the extreme left, was drawn up in line at right angles to the Namur road, with its left thrown back and two guns upon the road itself.

As the French cavalry advanced, the British cannon opened fire ; and then, whether owing to the concussion or not, the storm-cloud burst with a blinding flash and a terrific roar, while the rain poured down in such streams as are rarely seen even within the tropics.[1] Vivian, however, had already observed the French horse turning

[1] All accounts agree that the storm was of exceptional violence, and the rain extraordinarily heavy.

northward to outflank him ; so, ordering his battery to retire with all speed, he put his brigade about[1] and fell back upon Vandeleur's brigade, half a mile in rear. Vandeleur, instead of waiting for Vivian's brigade to pass through his own, withdrew as Vivian approached him, wherein he was probably right, though Vivian was of a different opinion.[2] The incident showed the danger of allowing brigades to manœuvre on their own account without the control of a divisional commander. The French were riding fast to come up on Vivian's left and envelop him, but the ground had become so deep under the deluge of rain that their pace failed, and Vivian was able to gain the bridge over the Thy with little loss. The fire of a few dismounted men sufficed to check further pursuit by the French when they reached the bridge itself ; and the brigade reached its bivouac with trifling loss. 1815. June 17.

In the centre Somerset's and Ponsonby's brigades passed through Genappe, which was the only serious defile in the road, without difficulty, and formed at the summit of a gentle slope on the north side of the village, having the Twenty-third Light Dragoons a little in advance of them, while the Seventh Hussars as rear-guard remained on the southern side. Though the bridge at Genappe was so narrow as to admit horsemen only in single file, the Seventh was withdrawn safely across it with no great difficulty and was formed in front of the Twenty-third, with one squadron in advance. A quarter of an hour later the French 1st Lancers debouched from Genappe, preceded by a small party of headlong troopers who proved, when captured, to be drunk. In the narrow streets of the village the columns became so much crowded that Uxbridge ordered a squadron of the Seventh Hussars

[1] "There began at the same moment as we went threes about a shower of rain, the heaviest I ever experienced." Memoirs of the 18th Hussars, p. 139. (I have altered the original spelling of the writer, the adjutant of the 18th, who rose from the ranks.)

[2] Tomkinson, p. 284 : *Waterloo Letters*, pp. 155-156.

1815. to charge. They did so, but, though received at the
June 17. halt by the enemy, were unable to make any impression upon the narrow front of lances which met them in the streets. After a confused struggle of cutting and thrusting with alternations of success and failure on both sides, the Seventh were finally repulsed, and the lancers imprudently following them up the hill in pursuit were charged by two squadrons of the First Life Guards. Under the weight of big men on big horses the lancers were borne back in confusion into the village, where, crushed together in the narrow streets, they could not use their lances and as a natural result were very roughly handled.

The retreat was then recommenced, covered by the Union Brigade; but the pursuit was little pressed, for the ground, except on the paved road, was everywhere fetlock-deep and in the ploughed fields hock-deep, so much so that Uxbridge gradually drew the whole of his men to the road. By evening the whole had reached Wellington's chosen position on the ridge of Mont St. Jean. As usual, Wellington had hidden his troops away on the reverse slope; and Napoleon, at the head of his advanced cavalry, could see little when the head of his column came up to the ale-house called La Belle Alliance, which stands on the eastern side of the Brussels road about fourteen hundred yards south of the centre of Wellington's position. The Emperor therefore unlimbered four batteries, two of which opened fire, and deployed his cuirassiers as if for attack. The challenge, to Wellington's great annoyance, was at once taken up by Cleeves's and Lloyd's batteries, which opened upon the columns of French infantry whose heads had begun to show themselves about La Belle Alliance. The Duke presently ordered these guns to cease fire, and Napoleon withdrew, having ascertained what he wanted to know, that the Allies were present in force.

French authors have called the retreat from Quatre Bras to Waterloo a disorderly movement, and one has

gone so far as to call the French advance upon the heels of the Allies "a furious pursuit." It does indeed appear that Uxbridge, perhaps ambitious of distinction, delayed the withdrawal of the cavalry for longer than was necessary or prudent, and that for a time the retreat of a part of it was, by Uxbridge's order and example, extremely hurried. Gardiner's battery of horse artillery, according to one of its subalterns, galloped for nearly the whole of the distance, and Mercer's was also hustled backward in the same fashion. This haste seems, however, to have been urged upon the artillery only, in order to get them out of the way; and, even so, time was found to replace the cast shoe of a gun-horse of Gardiner's battery, which does not point to great pressure on the part of the pursuers. The casualty-lists likewise fail to bear out the French contention. The total losses of the cavalry on the 17th amounted to ninety-three killed, wounded and missing, of whom forty-six belonged to the Seventh Hussars and eighteen to the Life-Guards, which were the only corps seriously engaged. The twenty-nine remaining casualties were distributed among seven different regiments, and were evidently due to the fire of artillery. A pursuit which produced no greater results could not have been very furious. Possibly, but for the heavy rain, the French might have pressed the British horse more severely; but even this is doubtful. The only time at which the French threatened any formidable enveloping movement was before the Allied rear-guard had reached Genappe; and the soil was not at that period so much saturated as to impede their movements seriously. Yet they accomplished nothing; and Vivian's brigade, which was at one moment that which was in greatest danger, escaped with five casualties. Altogether Uxbridge's account of the affair is probably correct—that it was the prettiest field-day of cavalry and horse-artillery that he ever witnessed. 1815. June 17.

1815. June 17. Throughout the afternoon and evening the rain continued with little intermission, and after nightfall it seems to have gathered new vigour and to have poured down steadily. Every soul in both armies was soaked to the skin. The tall rye, which covered most of the ground, was like standing water, and the ground was soon poached into mud knee-deep. It was difficult to light fires and impossible to keep them up. The Allies were better off than their opponents, for some at least of them had reached their bivouacs while the ground was still dry; and there was food for them when they arrived. The French infantry, on the other hand, did not come to their halting place until after dark, in some cases not until far into the night, after a most exhausting march through the mud; and the service of supply was, as usual, defective. All discipline seems to have ceased for the time. The men dispersed in search of food and shelter, pillaging mercilessly in all directions; and many of the cavalry remounted their horses and slept all night in the saddle as the best means of keeping dry,[1] a fact which is not without its bearing on the events of the next day. Napoleon himself indicated the stations for the corps that came up with him. D'Erlon's corps and Jacquinot's cavalry were foremost about Plancenoit, about half a mile in rear of La Belle Alliance, and the cavalry of Milhaud, Domont, Subervie and of the Guard immediately to rear of them. Reille, Lobau and Kellermann's Cuirassiers stopped at Genappe. The infantry of the Guard, vainly striving to reach head-quarters, for the most part lost their way and sought shelter where they could for the night; two or three regiments alone arriving towards midnight at Glabais, two miles south of Plancenoit. The Emperor himself slept at Le Caillou, about a mile

[1] If this were not narrated by a French authority (Houssaye, p. 274) I should hesitate to believe it. The French had a bad reputation as horse-masters throughout the Napoleonic wars, but this is the worst example of the defect that I have encountered.

and a half south of La Belle Alliance on the Brussels road. 1815. June 17.

While the French left wing and reserve were thus engaged, Grouchy had set the right wing in march for Gembloux, bidding Gérard's corps halt while Vandamme's marched past it to take the head of the column. Vandamme moved slowly, not reaching Point du Jour, where the road from Ligny to Gembloux crosses that from Quatre Bras to Namur, until three o'clock. Arriving there at about the same time Grouchy found news from Exelmans that the Prussian army was massed on the Orneau, and that he should follow it as soon as it moved. Exelmans, however, allowed Thielmann's corps (for it was that which he had under observation) to slip away unnoticed; and, when the infantry marched into Gembloux between six and seven o'clock, much harassed by bad roads and rain, Grouchy decided to halt them there for the night.

The messages sent in by his cavalry in the evening indicated that the Prussian column, which had seemed to be marching on Namur, was really moving upon Louvain; and intelligence from peasants, confirmed by the reports of the French light horse which arrived in the course of the night, went to show that the retreating enemy was moving towards Wavre. Putting all his information together, Grouchy reported to Napoleon at ten o'clock that the Prussian army had parted into three columns, of which one had retired on Namur, a second, which he supposed to be Blücher's, was withdrawing by the Roman road towards Liége, and a third was on its way to Wavre, presumably with the object of joining Wellington. He added that he was sending cavalry out towards the Roman road and should act according to their intelligence, following the principal mass of the Prussians in whatever direction they might take, whether to Perwez on the east or to Wavre on the north, to prevent them in this latter case from reaching Brussels and to separate them

1815. from Wellington. But, in the orders which he issued
June 17. for the morrow, he directed every part of his force to the east, evidently expecting to find the mass of the Prussians in that quarter. He seems to have regarded it as a small matter that perhaps a single corps of Blücher's army might be on its way to join Wellington. His business was to recover and to maintain contact with the main body, wherever it might be. The Prussians were assumed to have been badly beaten ; and, if one column of them had turned east, towards their base, and another north, presumably (though it was by no means certain) to gain Brussels, it was most probable that the main body would wheel eastward also. So Grouchy appears to have reasoned ; nor, saving the false assumption in regard to the Prussians, which was Napoleon's and not his own, did he reason unintelligently. His force was strong enough to press a defeated enemy in retreat, but not to combat an advancing enemy of thrice his strength.

Blücher, for his part, on the night of the 17th issued his orders in loyal fulfilment of his promise to Wellington. Bülow's corps was directed to march at daybreak to Chapelle St. Lambert, about four miles due east of Mont St. Jean, and Pirch I.'s to follow him to the same place. Arrived there, they were to halt and keep themselves concealed if the Allies were not seriously engaged, but, in the contrary event, they were to advance and fall upon Napoleon's right or eastern flank. Thielmann's and Ziethen's corps were to remain on the Dyle until the movements and intentions of the French at Gembloux—Grouchy's troops —should become clearer ; but Blücher hoped to lead them also to the assistance of the British. This determination was taken by Blücher against the advice of Gneisenau, and, as a broad principle of action, conceded all that Wellington could have wished. But the details of execution left much to be desired. Ziethen's corps at Bierges was within four miles of Chapelle St. Lambert as the crow flies, Thielmann's

at La Bavette within five miles, Pirch I.'s at Aisemont within six miles, and Bülow's at Dion-le-Mont within seven miles. Thus, when every hour of time was precious, it was the corps remotest from Wellington which was selected to march to his aid. There was one very good reason for choosing Bülow's corps in preference to Ziethen's for this service, because Bülow's, though much harassed by long marches, had not yet been engaged, whereas Ziethen's had lost heavily both on the 15th and the 16th; but there was no such excuse to be alleged for detaining Thielmann's corps, which had not suffered severely at Ligny. Moreover, even granting that the preference of Bülow's and Pirch I.'s corps were correct, the arrangements made for their march were, to say the least, defective. Bülow was directed not only to lead the way but to defile through the narrow streets of Wavre, whereby not merely was his journey prolonged by two miles, but the whole of Pirch's troops were compelled to mark time until the IVth Corps had passed on before them. If the Prussian staff, with Gneisenau at its head, did not foresee these complications and their inevitable result, it stands convicted of gross incompetence; if it did foresee them, and of deliberate design contrived them, it cannot be acquitted of despicable disloyalty to the Allies of Prussia and to the common cause of Europe. 1815. June 17.

Events at the Prussian head-quarters in the early morning of the 18th throw further light upon the proceedings of the Staff. Pirch I.'s corps was under arms at five o'clock, but Bülow's leading division did not reach Wavre until seven. Had all gone well—and it will be seen presently that all did not go well—Bülow's corps could not have cleared the village and the passages of the Dyle before ten o'clock, so that at best Pirch I.'s corps must have lost three or four hours' rest for no object whatever. The consequences to the advance of a third corps in the same direction were still more serious. Before eight o'clock a June 18.

1815. Prussian staff-officer came in from the outposts and
June 18. reported that the French at Gembloux had not moved, but appeared not to exceed fifteen thousand. "But," he added, "if they should be thirty thousand, one corps will be sufficient to guard the line of the Dyle, for the real issue of the campaign will be decided at Mont St. Jean." Blücher, quite agreeing with this view, wrote to Müffling at half-past nine that he should lead his troops in person to attack the French right wing, as soon as Napoleon should make any movement against Wellington; and he proposed, if Napoleon should not attack on the 18th, that the British and Prussians united should attack the Emperor on the 19th. The Field-marshal, beyond all dispute, was staunch enough, but not so Gneisenau. Of his own motive and without consultation with his chief, he added to this letter a postscript, begging Müffling to make quite sure that Wellington really intended to fight at Mont St. Jean, and not merely to make a demonstration, which might be fatal to the Prussian army. "It is of the highest importance"—such were the closing words—"to know exactly what the Duke will do, in order to arrange our movements." Here we see Gneisenau naked and unashamed. Wellington had declared his intention to fight if Blücher would support him. Blücher had accepted the declaration, as made, with all possible good faith, and promised the assistance for which Wellington asked. And then Gneisenau intervened, with dark hints that Wellington designed only to entrap the Prussian army so as to save his own, and that Blücher's promise (for such is the purport of the words quoted above) must after all depend upon fresh assurances from Müffling. No intellectual eminence can exalt a nature so essentially low as this, a nature which, from sheer terror of that which is high, abases all others to its own vile and despicable level. It was no fault of Gneisenau that the campaign of Waterloo did not end disastrously for the Allies.

While these matters were going forward, mishaps had already begun at Wavre. Bülow's leading division was hardly clear of the village when an accidental fire broke out in the principal street, preventing all passage through it; and the rest of the corps had to wait until the fire was burned out. Its march was thus delayed for two whole hours. Pirch I. was, therefore, unable to move until past noon, and at two o'clock half of his corps was still on the east bank of the Dyle. It had been decided by the Staff that, unless the French at Gembloux appeared before Wavre in too great force, Ziethen's corps and possibly Thielmann's also should follow Pirch I.; but Blücher left these details to Gneisenau, being impatient for the coming battle. He would be tied on his horse rather than miss it, he said; and at eleven o'clock the gallant old man rode off, bruised and shaken though he was, to join Bülow. But for his impetuous energy, Wellington might have fought the battle of Waterloo, for victory or defeat, without the help of a single Prussian soldier. 1815 June 18.

Meanwhile Grouchy for his part had received reports during the night which satisfied him that the bulk of the Prussians were moving north-west; and at six o'clock in the morning he sent a message to that effect to Napoleon. "The enemy," he wrote, "is retiring on Brussels to concentrate there or to fight a battle after uniting with Wellington. Blücher's Ist and IInd Corps seem to have gone, the one to Corbais, and other to Chaumont. I am starting for Walhain, whence I shall go to Corbais and Wavre." There seemed to him to be no particular reason for haste, so he did not order the foremost of his infantry to march until six o'clock; and, owing to the delay in the distribution of victuals, they did not start until after seven. The whole then advanced in one column upon a single road, excepting one division which, together with three brigades of cavalry, made a bend eastward in pursuance of Grouchy's ideas of the previous night. At Walhain St. Paul Grouchy learned from a retired French

1815. officer, or from some person passing for such, that the
June 18. Prussians who had marched through Wavre were on the way to the plain of La Chyse, seven miles east of the village, and were about to mass themselves there with the object either of fighting the pursuing French or of joining Wellington. He reckoned therefore that he could not do better than continue his march to Wavre, where he would be interposed between Wellington and the Prussian army, and from whence, if the Prussians should move towards Brussels, he could reach the capital before they did. He wrote a letter to this effect to Napoleon, adding that Wellington was no doubt retreating before the Emperor ; and a heavy distant cannonade which he heard in the direction of Mont St. Jean an hour or two later availed not, in spite of the remonstrances of his generals, to make him change the direction of his march. He reasoned once again from Napoleon's hypothesis that the Prussians could not have recovered from their defeat, that they had no alternative but to retire, and that, as a natural consequence, Wellington must retreat also.

Napoleon, as the originator of this delusion, of course cherished it with unshaken attachment. It is said that he went round his outposts at one o'clock in the morning to be sure that Wellington was not escaping by stealth. Soon after dawn came in Grouchy's letter, written at two o'clock of the 17th, to the effect that, if the main body of the Prussians proved to be marching on Wavre, he would follow them to head them off from Brussels and separate them from Wellington. All, therefore, seemed to be satisfactory. Orders for the disposition of the troops had already been issued on the previous day, from which it appears that Napoleon intended to move early ; but the soil was so much sodden after fifteen hours of nearly continuous rain as to make the movement of artillery extremely difficult ; and the attack was therefore deferred till nine o'clock. At eight o'clock the Emperor breakfasted and spoke with confidence of the issue of the coming

combat. Soult was not so sanguine, and repeated an opinion which he had uttered on the previous morning, that Grouchy's detachment was too strong and that part of it should be summoned to the main army. "You think Wellington a great general because he beat you," answered the Emperor; "I tell you that he is a bad general and that the English troops are bad troops, and that we will make short work of them." Reille entering shortly afterwards, Napoleon asked his opinion of the British army. "When well posted, as Wellington knows how to post them," he answered, "I consider it invincible by a frontal attack; but it is less flexible than ours. If one cannot beat them by a direct attack, one can do so by manœuvring." The Emperor took no notice. 1815. June 18.

Jerome presently came in and reported, on the information of a waiter at the inn at Genappe, that one of Wellington's staff, when dining there on the 16th, had spoken of a projected junction between the British and the Prussians at the entrance to the forest of Soignes. "After such a battle as Ligny," answered the Emperor, "the junction of the English and Prussians is impossible for another two days; besides, the Prussians have Grouchy at their heels. It is very lucky that the English are standing fast. I shall hammer them with my artillery, charge them with my cavalry to make them show themselves, and, when I am quite sure where the actual English are, I shall go straight at them with my Old Guard."[1] In such a frame of mind it is small wonder that he was perfectly satisfied with Grouchy's report of the previous night. The Emperor informed him in reply that he was about to attack the English at Waterloo, but gave him no further order than to push on to Wavre and drive the Prussians before him. Grouchy's letter of the morning, which reached him shortly after ten o'clock, evoked from him no further instructions. The Prussians would need two days longer to recover themselves.

[1] *Vie Militaire du Général Foy*, pp. 278-279.

1815. The English were bad troops under a bad general.
June 18. There was nothing more to be said.

Wellington on his side waited, apparently, until past one o'clock in the morning of the 18th before he received Blücher's letter, assuring him that at least one Prussian corps would march to his assistance in the course of the day. It is possible, indeed, that he may have received some earlier intimation which was sufficient to satisfy him ; but it is very evident that he did not at that hour count upon a decisive battle. Four letters from him, dated at three o'clock in the morning, are preserved, in each of which he alludes to the possibility that his position might be turned by way of Hal, and that Brussels might thereby be uncovered ; and, to meet such a contingency, he ordered Antwerp to be placed in a state of siege, recommending all refugees from Brussels to remove themselves thither. In the circumstances, it has astonished many that he should have taken no measures against the possibility of a retreat, to which he might be compelled either by Blücher's inability to support him or by the turning movement above mentioned. As a matter of fact, a subaltern of Vivian's brigade did receive orders on the night of the 17th to look for a road through the forest of Soignes, parallel to the main road and east of it, whereby the brigade might retire, covering the left of the army ; so it is reasonable to infer that other officers received the like instruction.[1] But the absence of any general directions in the event of a retreat shows that Wellington contemplated no immediate necessity for them. In other words, he was satisfied, either by his own judgment or by direct intimation, that he could count upon Blücher's assistance, and was resolved to stand his ground until he should be manœuvred out of it.

That he should have expected such a manœuvre round his right flank has caused general astonishment. The explanation, however, is not difficult. He fell

[1] *Waterloo Letters*, p. 196.

into Napoleon's error of overestimating the power of his own prestige. "I think," he said a few weeks later at Paris, "that if I had been Bonaparte I should have respected the English infantry more after what I must have heard of them in Spain; and that I should not have taken the bull by the horns. I should have turned a flank, the right flank. I should have kept the English army occupied by a demonstration to attack or by slight attacks, while in fact I was moving the main army by Hal on Brussels."[1] It is objected to such a conception that it was contrary to Napoleon's whole plan of campaign, which was to separate Wellington's army from Blücher's. But this is wisdom after the event, if not indeed a begging of the whole question. We have seen from the Emperor's orders to Ney on the 16th of June that he attached great importance to the capture of Brussels, not only for its moral effect but because it would sever the British from Ostend; and this idea is wholly incompatible with the separation of the armies of the Allies. If Napoleon had listened to the warnings of Soult and Reille — and the ablest[2] French historian of the campaign admits that he would have done well to consider them seriously—the vexed question would have been settled by the choice of the flank, western or eastern, by which he decided to turn Wellington's position. The only certain thing is that he could not have separated the British at once from their base and from the Prussians by one and the same manœuvre. The truth probably is that his projects were at no time so clear and well defined as he afterwards attempted to prove them to be.

1815. June 18.

Be that as it may, the Duke, holding firmly to his opinion, left Colville's division, less one brigade, and Prince Frederick's Netherlandish corps, together some fifteen to eighteen thousand men, at Hal and Tubize,

[1] *Journal of Colonel James Stanhope.* MS. The writer says that the statement was made at a dinner at Grassini's in Paris in answer to the question of a French gentleman, and that he heard the words himself from the Duke's own mouth. [2] Houssaye, p. 320.

1815. nine to eleven miles west of Mont St. Jean, with orders,
June 18. issued late on the 17th, to defend the position at Hal for as long as possible. In the course of the night Colville sent a staff-officer, Colonel Woodford, to Wellington for orders. Woodford arrived early in the morning of the 18th, but at a time when it was certain that a pitched battle was imminent. The Duke told him that it was too late for the division at Hal to move up, but added, "Now that you are here, stay with me." Evidently Wellington felt confident of Blücher's early appearance on the field; nor was he unreasonable, for the Prussian advanced parties were actually visible at ten o'clock filing across the Lasnes less than four miles to the west.

The morning of the 18th broke dull and overcast. The thunder-clouds had not yet quite rained themselves out; and, though they were rising and the weather generally tended to improve, there were scattered showers at different points of the line throughout the day.[1] The British, roused from their cheerless bivouac, busied themselves with looking to their arms and getting rid of the useless charges loaded on the previous day, too often by firing them off. The position of Mont St. Jean, or, as we may now call it, of Waterloo, had been studied by the Royal Engineers, who had drawn up plans of it before the opening of the campaign. It consists of two nearly parallel ridges, that of Mont St. Jean on the north and that of La Belle Alliance in the south, which run east and west, and enclose between them a narrow plain. This plain is more truly a minute watershed, from which two tiny rills flow east and west, making well-defined valleys for themselves when, on reaching the hamlets of Smohain on one side and Braine l'Alleud on the other, they change their course to a northerly direction.

[1] The contradictory reports of the weather during the day from various quarters are most easily explained in this way. Every one knows by experience how long it is before the last drop falls after a heavy thunderstorm.

There rises from it, however, a secondary ridge, which runs from a point about seven hundred yards north of La Belle Alliance for about half a mile north-westward. The difference in elevation between the highest and the lowest points of the plain does not exceed sixty feet, and the gradients are nowhere so severe as to check the speed of a galloping horse either up or down. The ground was open and unfenced, and in the summer of 1815 was for the most part covered with tall waving rye. Straight through the centre of the position runs the road from Brussels to Charleroi, marked on the southern ridge by the farm of La Belle Alliance and on the northern by that of La Haye Sainte, which stand about eleven hundred yards apart. About three hundred yards north of La Haye Sainte this road crosses another, running east and west from Ohain to Braine l'Alleud, and then turns slightly westward past the farm and hamlet of Mont St. Jean to the village of Waterloo, where it enters the forest of Soignes and runs through it to Brussels. 1815. June 18.

The heights of Mont St. Jean, which had been chosen by Wellington for his battle-ground, offered advantages which were well suited to his defensive tactics. The forward or southern slope was a fairly steep glacis, and the reverse slope was easy, so that all movements in rear of the fighting line were concealed. Along the summit, in places slightly in rear of it, ran the cross-road, already mentioned, from Braine l'Alleud to Ohain, screened, eastward of La Haye Sainte, on each side by thick hedges which were impenetrable by cavalry, and passing through a succession of cuttings six or seven feet deep on the way westward to Braine l'Alleud. In advance of the right centre stands the mansion of Hougoumont, which, with its grounds, covered a rectangular space some five hundred yards square, enclosed with hedges. From north to south more than half of this area was covered by a park, the western part of which was coppice and the eastern open ground. Near the north-western angle stands

1815. June 18. the house with its chapel, its extensive outbuildings, and its large garden, walled on the south and east sides; the whole being surrounded on the north, and more extensively on the east, by a fenced orchard. In the centre of the position La Haye Sainte, a quadrangle stoutly built of stone, was shielded on the north by a terraced kitchen-garden, and on the south by a long belt of enclosed orchard which ran along the western side of the Brussels road, and flanked it for over two hundred and fifty yards. To the rear of the farm and on the eastern side of the road were a gravel-pit and a mound, shut in at the back by a hedge which adjoined the road. The road itself was blocked by one abatis at the end of the pit, and by another in line with the south wall of the farm. On the left of the position the farms of Papelotte and La Haie, together with the hamlet of Smohain and the mansion of Frischermont, presented a third fortified post which, like Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte, thrust themselves out like bastions in advance of the main array. The general form of the position was concave, presenting to any assailant the difficult problem of attacking a shallow re-entrant angle.

The extreme left of the line was occupied by Vivian's brigade of light cavalry, with Vandeleur's brigade immediately on its right. Then, in succession from left to right, came the Hanoverian infantry brigades of Vincke and Best, Pack's British, Bijlandt's Netherlanders, and Kempt's British, the right-hand battalion of this last leaning its right flank upon the Brussels road. Immediately on the west side of this road stood Ompteda's brigade of the German Legion, and next to them Kielmansegge's Hanoverians and Colin Halkett's British, the whole composing Charles Alten's division. On the right of Halkett, upon the hill in rear of Hougoumont, stood in succession Maitland's and Byng's brigades of Guards.[1] On the right of

[1] Stanhope of 3/1st Guards says in his journal, "When the battle began we had two or three squares between us and the 3rd Division;

Byng, astride the road from Nivelle to Brussels, was Mitchell's brigade, lining the road which runs westward from that road to Braine l'Alleud. On the plateau behind Mitchell was massed Clinton's division, and, in rear of Clinton again, the Brunswick contingent was held in reserve at the village of Merbe Braine. Lastly Chassé's Netherlandish Division, with sixteen guns, held Braine l'Alleud, having one brigade thrown forward in advance of the village and at right angles to the main line of battle. Wellington to the very end was nervous for his right flank. 1815. June 18.

The only infantry in second line near the centre were Kruse's three Nassau battalions in rear of Alten's division, and Lambert's British brigade, just returned from America, which did not reach the field until eleven o'clock and was then stationed at the cross-roads just in front of Mont St. Jean. The cavalry was for the most part massed in rear of the centre, the Household and Union brigades under Somerset and Ponsonby being immediately to west and east of the Brussels road, with Van Merlen's Netherlanders to the rear of Somerset, Dörnberg's and Arentschild's brigades to Somerset's right, and Trip's and de Ghigny's Netherlanders immediately behind the Household and Union brigades. Grant's brigade stood behind the Guards, with one squadron of the Fifteenth Hussars covering Mitchell's right flank.

Of the artillery six mounted batteries were with the cavalry brigades ; the two Brunswick batteries were with their own contingent, and Bean's, Sinclair's and Braun's batteries were in reserve about Mont St. Jean. Ross's battery was on the high ground behind La Haye Sainte, with two guns pointing down the road; Rogers's and Cleeves's were in front of Alten's division; Kuhlmann's and Sandham's in front of the Guards;

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before it ended, the red-coats were the nearest battalion." The detail is not very important though it is curious : and the memory of blue coats interposed between two masses of red is likely to be correct.

1815. Sympher's and Bolton's in reserve with Clinton's
June 18. division.

Of the advanced posts, Hougoumont was held by four light companies of the Guards, two hundred Hanoverians from Kielmansegge's brigade and one of Prince Bernhard's Nassau battalions. La Haye Sainte was entrusted to the 2nd Light Battalion of the German Legion under Major Baring; two companies of the Ninety-fifth Rifles occupying the gravel-pit. Smohain, Papelotte, La Haie and Frischermont were occupied by the four remaining battalions of Prince Bernhard's brigade.

The total number of Wellington's army amounted to about sixty-three thousand men,[1] of which twenty-one thousand were British, five thousand of the German Legion, nearly eleven thousand Hanoverians, fifty-five hundred Brunswickers, three thousand Nassauers and nearly seventeen thousand Netherlanders. The cannon numbered one hundred and fifty-six, seventy-eight of them British, eighteen of the German Legion and thirty-two Netherlandish. Thanks to the importunity of Sir Augustus Frazer, three out of the seven mounted batteries were furnished with nine-pounder in lieu of six-pounder guns. Whinyates's battery was provided with eight hundred rockets in addition to its field-pieces; but, in spite of Wellington's repeated representations from the Peninsula, there were no cannon on the side of the Allies that could match Napoleon's favourite twelve-pounders.

It will be observed that in this line of battle the corps, into which the army had been originally organised, were broken up, or any rate disregarded, probably with the object of depriving the Prince of Orange of the definite command of any large number of troops. The Prince had given sufficient trouble at Quatre-Bras with his mischievous interference; and the British troops would have lost much of their confidence if they had thought that they were still to be

[1] Houssaye gives him 67,700 men and 174 guns.

subjected to the caprice of so unskilful a commander. 1815.
It will be remarked likewise that Wellington was June 18.
careful to intersperse the foreign troops among the British, leaving them nowhere without red-coats close at hand ; while the Netherlanders, with the exception of Bijlandt's brigade, which lay between Pack's and Kempt's, were carefully ensconced in the villages on the extreme flanks. "Form as usual" had been the Duke's sole direction to his divisional generals ; and accordingly they had drawn up their troops in rear of the crest of the ridge, leaving the forward slope to be disputed only by their massed light companies under a field-officer. Bijlandt's brigade, however, not understanding the arrangement, placed itself in line with the skirmishers. No field-works were thrown up on any part of the line, though no doubt they would have been of great advantage. Wellington on the night of the 17th ordered a company of engineers to come over from Hal and fortify Braine l'Alleud; but the men lost their way in the dark and arrived too late. Any attempts to entrench the ground on the morning of the 18th were frustrated by want of tools, or in other words by bad management. Embrasures had, however, been cut in the hedges for the guns, and both Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte had been more or less prepared for defence. The main buildings and the garden wall at Hougoumont had indeed been made fairly strong, and at La Haye Sainte the walls had been loopholed ; but both posts might with a little work have been made more formidable. It appears that the Duke forbade any preliminary fortification lest his intentions should be thereby betrayed.

Napoleon's line of battle was as follows: On the right stood d'Erlon's corps, with its eastern flank covered by Jacquinot's cavalry division. Of the infantry Durutte's stood on the extreme right, and next to it in succession on the left the divisions of Marcognet, Donzelot and Quiot, the last named resting its left flank on the Brussels road. The artillery was

1815. June 18. posted in the intervals of brigades. West of the road Reille's three divisions occupied the first line; Bachelu's division on the right, Foy's in the centre, and Jerome's on the left, with the artillery in the front and Piré's cavalry thrown out westward to guard the left flank. In second line, behind d'Erlon was Milhaud's cavalry corps, with Domont's and Subervie's cavalry divisions massed on its left just to east of the Brussels road. Lobau's corps was in rear of Bachelu, with its artillery on its left flank; and Kellermann's cavalry was extended in rear of Reille, l'Heritier's division on the right and Roussel d'Harbal's on the left. In the third line, and in reserve, stood the Imperial Guard, the infantry and artillery assembled close to the road, with the light cavalry on the right and the heavy cavalry on the left. The batteries of horse-artillery were attached each to its division of cavalry. In all Napoleon counted about seventy thousand [1] men, including fifty-two thousand infantry and fifteen thousand cavalry, with two hundred and sixty-six guns. He had thus a great superiority in the matter of artillery, which was even more marked in the weight of metal than in the number of guns.

The massing of troops on and about the road revealed his intention of making his principal onset, as at Ligny, upon his enemy's centre; which, indeed, he announced in his last orders, issued at about eleven o'clock. In these he said plainly that the attack would be delivered upon Mont St. Jean at the intersection of the roads by d'Erlon's corps, and that the twelve-pounder batteries of the 1st, 2nd and 6th Corps, twenty-four guns in all, would be massed together in support of it. The assault was to be opened by Quiot's division, on the left, whose left flank would be covered by a simultaneous advance of Reille's corps; and the sappers of the 1st Corps were to be ready to barricade the village of Mont St. Jean. Wellington, on the

[1] Houssaye gives the figure at 74,000. I have reduced this, as I have Houssaye's total of Wellington's army, by 4000.

contrary, had concentrated the best of his troops, the Guards and Clinton's division, on his right, leaving the defence of his centre to Ompteda's brigade of the Legion, and to Picton's division, which last had suffered very heavily at Quatre-Bras. Strangely enough, as events turned out, the battle was conducted far more according to the preconception of Wellington than of Napoleon. 1815. June 18.

The time for this attack was fixed for one o'clock in the afternoon. The Emperor's original instructions had been that all troops should be in their appointed stations by nine o'clock ; but this was found to be impossible. It took much time to gather in the scattered bodies that had halted between Genappe and Plancenoit during the miserable night of the 17th. Reille's corps started, according to his account, from Genappe at daybreak, but did not pass Napoleon's head-quarters—a march of three miles—until nine. The Guard, according to one authority, did not break up its bivouac until ten, and Durutte reported that he did not take his place on the field until nearly noon.[1] It was natural that the French commanders should give their drenched and exhausted men some time to clean their arms and cook their breakfasts ; but it is probable, looking to the complaints of marauding made by several French officers, that it took much time, in at any rate some regiments, to assemble the soldiers together, and that it was the indiscipline of his army, countenanced through many campaigns by the practice of living on the country, which was the true cause of Napoleon's delay in opening the battle of Waterloo. He might of course have begun the action with such troops as he had on the field, but he judged it wiser to wait until all were practically present, no doubt comforting himself, quite reasonably, with the reflection that every hour would improve the ground for the movement of his cavalry and still more of his artillery.

Having ridden down the line of his soldiers, who

[1] See Houssaye, pp. 316-318.

1815. June 18. received him with wild enthusiasm, the Emperor shortly after eleven o'clock decided to make a demonstration on the Allied flanks, perhaps with some hope of inducing Wellington to weaken his centre. Accordingly Jacquinot's cavalry made a show of turning the Allied left about Frischermont, while Reille ordered Jerome's division to advance upon the approaches to Hougoumont. Jacquinot was speedily turned back, with some slight loss, by the muskets and cannon of the Nassauers ; but Jerome's column advanced steadily towards the south-western angle of the enclosure, and threw out a cloud of skirmishers to cover the opening of the attack. As the French masses came into sight, three British batteries from the left rear of Hougoumont opened upon them with such effect that the columns swerved off to their left. Part of Reille's cannon then came into action and were supported, pursuant to an order from Napoleon, by Kellermann's mounted batteries. The duel of artillery became hot ; and Bauduin's brigade, advancing in echelon of battalions from the left, plunged down, not without heavy loss, into the hollow beneath the southern border of the coppice. Piré's cavalry covered their left flank as they moved. With Jerome and Bauduin at their head, some of the French leaped into the wood and engaged the Nassauers and Hanoverians who were holding the border. Twice the Allied sharp-shooters drove the enemy out into the open, and Bauduin himself was killed at the very outset. But the French skirmishers, continually strengthened as their supports came up, presently established their footing within the coppice ; and, though both Nassauers and Hanoverians fought stoutly as they retired from tree to tree, they were pressed back into the orchard. The French then advanced rapidly through the wood and over the park in pursuit, but were checked at the wall of the garden, which had been pierced by two tiers of loopholes and was held by a company of the Coldstream Guards. Strive as they might with the utmost

gallantry to scale the wall, the French were shot down at every point by a murderous fire. Bull's howitzer battery by Wellington's orders began to throw shells into the wood with great effect. The Guards counter-attacked, the Hanoverians and Nassauers seem to have rallied to their support, and the French were driven back with heavy loss upon their supports. 1815. June 18.

A fortified post, when strenuously defended, frequently assumes in the eyes of the assailants an importance out of all proportion to its true tactical value. If the centre of the Allied line were pierced, pursuant to Napoleon's design, Hougoumont would become untenable on the spot. There was no occasion, therefore, for the French to do more than occupy the wood, at once menacing the garrison of the mansion and barring the way to an offensive movement of the Allies. But Jerome, nettled at his repulse, called up Soye's brigade to renew the attack in the coppice, and directed the remains of Bauduin's to turn the buildings by the western side. The French stormed forward with the greatest gallantry, driving the Nassauers before them; but a party of the light companies of the Coldstream and Third Guards, taking shelter behind a lane and a haystack below the south-western corner of the mansion, resisted desperately. At length, the haystack being ablaze and their retreat nearly cut off, these ran back to the gateway in the northern front of the buildings and took refuge in the courtyard, where they began hastily to barricade the gate with whatever came first to hand. A French subaltern of the 1st Light snatched an axe from one of his pioneers and, swinging it with gigantic strength, broke down the bars. A few men rushed after him into the courtyard, but, after a brief though desperate struggle, four officers and a sergeant of the Coldstream succeeded by sheer bodily strength in closing the gate; and the little band of French soldiers, with the intrepid subaltern [1] among

[1] His name was Legros. Houssaye calls him lieutenant; but it appears from Martineau's list that he was only a sub-lieutenant.

1815. June 18. them, was slain to a man. Others of Jerome's skirmishers swept round the north side of the buildings, and others again, extending themselves to westward, crept up unseen through the tall rye and opening fire upon Smith's British battery, which was unlimbered above them, compelled it to retire. Four companies of the Coldstream under Colonel Woodford, however, now came up and, driving off the skirmishers first, fell next upon the flank of the 1st Light. Caught between two fires, from within the wall and without, the French gave way immediately. Some of Soye's men, attempting to debouch from the wood into the orchard, were likewise charged by the light companies of the First Guards under Lord Saltoun and hurled back in disorder. Woodford seized the moment to strengthen the garrison within the buildings ; and Hougoumont was for the present safe.

By this time Napoleon's dispositions for his main attack were nearly if not quite complete ; but still Jerome chose to think that his one corner of the field was the most important. He had by this time taken the keen edge off most of the seven battalions of Bauduin's brigade, which had suffered only trifling loss at Quatre-Bras, and off the one regiment of Soye's brigade which had not been severely punished in that action. But, persisting in his onslaught, he now called battalion after battalion of Foy's division into action, making use presumably of Gauthier's brigade, for Jamin's had lost over forty officers and from six to seven hundred men on the 16th. Jerome now sent his skirmishers to creep along the eastern hedge of the park, in order to turn the enclosures by the east, while the troops in the wood advanced again to a gap in the fence which separated the coppice from the orchard. These last met and forced back Saltoun's light companies of the First Guards, which fell back slowly from tree to tree, drawing their assailants under the fire of the red-coats that lined the eastern wall of the garden. At the same time Wellington sent two companies of the Third

Guards down the outer hedge to meet the French flanking parties upon the eastern side ; and after a sharp fight the enemy was again driven back, though the British line of defence was by this time contracted to the southern hedge of the orchard and the southern wall of the garden. 1815. June 18.

It was now somewhat past one o'clock. Shortly before one, Ney, who was in charge of Napoleon's main attack, had sent a message to say that all was ready, when the Emperor, who had taken his station on a high knoll in front of the farm of Rossomme, close to the Brussels road, observed a column of troops, some five or six miles to north-east, emerging from the wood of Chapelle St. Lambert. Uncertain what they might be, he sent off a detachment of cavalry to ascertain, when a Prussian hussar, captured by a French patrol about Lasnes, was brought to him. This man, who was extremely communicative, reported that the column just observed was Bülow's vanguard, and that the entire Prussian army had been assembled on the previous night at Wavre. The Emperor, who had already written to Grouchy, ordering him to close in towards the main French army, now added the information gained from the Prussian prisoner, with injunctions to hasten the movement and crush Bülow, while Soult appended the further explanation, " Manœuvre so as to join our right." Napoleon then sent out Subervie's and Domont's divisions of light cavalry to observe the movements of the Prussians, occupy the passages by which they would debouch, and join hands with Grouchy's columns as soon as they should appear. Lobau's corps was likewise detached to support this cavalry in some position where it could check the advance of this new enemy. The total number of troops thus withdrawn from the field amounted to some eight thousand infantry and three thousand cavalry, with thirty-two guns.

Before the last orders had been given, the French guns opened fire to cover the great advance upon

1815. June 18. Wellington's left centre. No fewer than eighty pieces, twenty-four of them the Emperor's favourite twelve-pounders, had been massed about and before La Belle Alliance, and were now raining round-shot upon the opposite slope as fast as the gunners could load them. At about half-past one d'Erlon's infantry began to move in echelon of divisions from the left, at intervals of a quarter of a mile between divisions. Quiot's led the way immediately on the east side of the Brussels road; and then followed in succession to the right the divisions of Donzelot, Marcognet and Durutte, the whole numbering some sixteen thousand men. Quiot's division was formed with its two brigades side by side, each brigade in close column of battalions. The remainder were simply massed in close column of battalions, three ranks deep; consequently, each division, being made up of eight battalions of a strength varying from four hundred and fifty to six hundred men, took the form of a dense mass with a front of one hundred and seventy to two hundred men and a depth of twenty-four men. The inevitable result was that out of some four thousand muskets only four hundred at most were in the firing line. This was an old fault, for which the French had suffered a score of times in the Peninsula; but it was aggravated in this instance by closing up the battalions until they practically made only one body, twenty-four ranks deep, without leaving any distance between them for deployment. Indeed it is difficult to see how these divisions could have been deployed at all unless the battalions had filed to the right or left by threes, which was an extremely awkward, if not impossible, manœuvre under a heavy fire. To whose instructions this formation was due does not appear; but Ney, who was in command of the attack, d'Erlon, who was in command of the corps, Quiot and Marcognet, the divisional leaders, had all of them served in Spain, and should have known better than to match men so clumsily arrayed against British troops in position.

However, d'Erlon's corps, having been defrauded of its share of battle on the 16th, was eager for the fight, and advanced with loud shouts to the attack. 1815. June 18.

As the French columns drew near the hostile line, they threw out skirmishers ; and, as Quiot's division approached La Haye Sainte, the left brigade inclined slightly to the left to attack the farm, while the right brigade continued its advance on the east side of the road. Swarming into the orchard the French engaged three companies of the 2nd Light Battalion of the Legion, which received them with a biting fire, but were borne back by sheer weight of numbers into the barn. On the western side of the orchard, however, two companies of the 1st Light Battalion and one of Hanoverian rifles poured destructive volleys into the flank of the advancing enemy ; and, Kielmansegge having detached a light battalion to the assistance of the garrison, Baring led his men to a counter-attack. But Napoleon had detached Travers's brigade of cuirassiers to cover the left flank of Quiot, and these, coming suddenly upon the skirmishers just as Kielmansegge's men were joining them, caused the whole to crowd together in confusion. The cuirassiers charged ; the counter-attack in the garden, being unsupported, gave way ; the French, sweeping round the buildings, mastered the garden on the north side ; and the Germans took refuge where best they could, some in the main position and some in the buildings. Ten of their officers fell in this unfortunate affair ; but the men in the buildings stood firm, and not all the efforts of the French could avail to dislodge them. Farther to the east the two companies of Rifles in the gravel-pit were outflanked and forced back upon their reserves on the mound ; and these in turn, sticking to their position for too long, were obliged to retreat with some precipitation across the Ohain road, where the battalion re-formed a few yards in rear of the northern hedge. Thus La Haye Sainte was totally isolated, but remained safe in the hands of its valiant garrison.

1815. June 18. Still farther to the east, Bourgeois's brigade, struck by the fire of the Rifles from the mound and of Ross's guns in the road, had swerved to the right close to Donzelot's division, while Marcognet's division had likewise gravitated to its left towards Donzelot's, so that practically the five brigades advanced as one. Opposed to them were four battalions of Bijlandt's Netherlandish brigade (which at noon had been withdrawn in rear of the road) in first line, and the remaining battalion, flanked to its right and left by the brigades of Kempt and Pack, in second line. The Netherlanders had been much shaken, as was pardonable in raw troops, by the fire of the French artillery; and, as the masses of the French infantry drew nearer, they became more and more unsteady. Finally, after a little wild firing they broke and ran away, in spite of all the efforts of their officers, and taking shelter on the reverse slope of the position, refused, at any rate most of them, to come forward again.[1] In their flight they carried away with them for the moment the gunners of Bijleveld's Netherlandish battery, who, in contrast to its comrades of the infantry, had stood to their pieces most valiantly. Thus a large gap was torn in the Allied line, but Picton, who had marked the wavering of the Belgians, deployed Kempt's brigade, which, holding its fire until Bourgeois was within close range—at some points, it should seem, within twenty yards—poured in a volley

[1] Once again, in spite of all the pleading of Le Bas and Wommersom, the testimony of all British narrators is so strong as to the misbehaviour of Bijlandt's brigade that I cannot reject it. Moreover, it seems to be confirmed rather than refuted by the official report of Colonel van Zuylen, upon which those distinguished authors so greatly rely. The Colonel ascribes the feebleness of his compatriots' fire to the fact that they were formed in two ranks instead of three, which was presumably the Prince of Orange's doing. He admits that the fall of a few files produced a gap through which the French columns advanced, that the British attacked the said columns in flank, and that he himself seconded their movement with 400 men that he had rallied. If the Netherlanders had not run away, they would have been in front of the French and more than 400 strong. Nor would the 400 have needed rallying.

and then charged with the bayonet, causing the enemy to recoil with heavy loss. In this affray Picton received a bullet in the temple and fell from his horse dead. 1815. June 18.

Donzelot meanwhile pressed on to the summit of the ridge, where he halted within forty yards of the road in order to deploy, while his skirmishers pushed on through the hedges that lined it. Marcognet, thinking deployment impossible, pressed forward without attempting to change his formation ; and his leading battalions bored their way through the hedges as best they could, though not without disorder. There was nothing, to all appearance, to stop this mass, some eight thousand strong, but Pack's brigade of the Royals, Forty-second, Forty-fourth and Ninety-second, which, after their losses at Quatre Bras, counted between them barely fourteen hundred bayonets. Leaving the Forty-fourth in reserve, Pack formed the three remaining battalions four deep and advanced, apparently in echelon from the left—for the Ninety-second was the first to come into action—to within twenty yards of the enemy, when they fired their volleys in quick succession obliquely into the front and flank of Marcognet's column. It does not appear that the French were thereby checked, though, having sustained much loss from the Allied artillery during the advance, they may have been for the moment staggered. According to the French account, which seems the most probable, Marcognet's leading battalions returned the fire, and leaped forward with the bayonet. The British did not at once turn, apparently, and for a few moments there was a confused and deadly fight; but the odds against them were too strong — full four, indeed if Donzelot's division be reckoned, full eight to one. The moment was most critical. Bourgeois's brigade, though shaken, had not given way past recovery. On its left Travers's cuirassiers had re-formed after cutting the Hanoverian battalion to pieces, and

1815. June 18. were advancing up the hill. On its right Donzelot was deploying on the crest of the ridge, so far undefeated, and Marcognet was threatening to sweep everything before him with the bayonet. On the side of the Allies Kempt's brigade was steady and for the moment victorious. The gunners, by or without orders, were leaving their guns and hurrying to the rear ;[1] and Pack's brigade, though not past rallying, was certainly not standing firm.[2] It is small wonder that Napoleon and his staff, watching the struggle from La Belle Alliance, thought that all was going well.

But before the French columns reached the summit, Uxbridge had ordered the Union Brigade farther to the left, over against the line of Donzelot's and Marcognet's attack, and had himself taken post with the Household Brigade immediately to west of the Brussels road. As Travers's cuirassiers came up the slope he directed the King's Dragoon Guards and First Life Guards against their front, with the Second Life Guards in echelon to their left, and held the Blues in reserve. Travers's left being somewhat in advance was first checked, but the right, pushing on, came upon the deep cutting in the Ohain road immediately to west of the cross-ways. Scrambling down one side and up the other, they were met, before they could re-form their ranks, by the remainder of the King's Dragoon Guards and First Life Guards. Thus caught at a disadvantage, the cuirassiers were broken and repulsed. Some turned straight back and galloped down the hill, pursued by the two British regiments ; others inclined to their right, with the Second Life Guards at their heels, plunged into the Brussels road, and galloped down it as far as the barricade before La

[1] A sergeant of Rogers's battery actually spiked one of his guns at this time. *Waterloo Letters*, p. 238.

[2] See *Waterloo Letters*, pp. 72, 77, 81, 82. The only regiment mentioned as inclined to retire is the 92nd, but I do not believe that, if they had retired, the others would have stood.

Haye Sainte, where, being stopped, they wheeled to their left and fled through the open space between the Ohain road and the gravel-pit. 1815. June 18.

Simultaneously the Union Brigade swooped down upon the heads of the French infantry columns, the Royals on the right assailing Bourgeois's brigade, the Inniskillings falling upon Donzelot and the Greys upon Marcognet. They were barely one thousand sabres altogether, but their approach was hidden from the French by the hollows of the reverse slope of the ridge, and their onslaught was as furious as it was sudden. For a moment the French masses seethed madly as the unhappy men, tightly crowded together, strove to defend themselves with musket and bayonet ; and then they dissolved into a mere pack of fugitives, flying down the slope towards their own position, with the sabres of the British dragoons playing havoc among them. As it chanced, some of Travers's cuirassiers were driven headlong into the broken ranks of the French infantry, increasing their confusion ; and the Second Life Guards joining the right of the Inniskillings, the two regiments combined in the impartial chase of horse and foot.

Seldom in all military history has there been seen a more terrific smashing of formed infantry by cavalry. It is small wonder that the British troopers became drunk and maddened by their success. Their horses were good and fairly fresh, for there had been no weight crushing down their backs all night, as in the case of the French ; the ground was in their favour ; the men could not only sit in the saddle but could ride ; and from ten to fifteen thousand French were retreating or flying before them. Quiot's troops, left in isolation at La Haye Sainte, abandoned the attack. Durutte on the extreme east, after driving the Nassauers from Papelotte and nearly reaching the crest of the ridge, found his right flank assailed by the Twelfth Light Dragoons, who drove him back in great confusion upon his reserves. It seemed as if the

1815. British cavalry would sweep all before them ; and no
June 18. sound of voice or trumpet could make the men stop.

The Household and Union Brigades galloped on over the plain and up the acclivity of La Belle Alliance, until the former came under the fire of Bachelu's division, which had been slightly advanced to cover d'Erlon's flank during his attack, and were received with a storm of bullets which overthrew many men and scores of horses. Then, seeing a compact body of cuirassiers advancing against them, they wheeled about and retreated, the Blues, which were less out of hand than the rest, striving to cover the retreat. Farther to the left the Greys, with some of the Royals and Inniskillings, dashed into the midst of two divisional batteries, half-way up the ridge, cut down gunners, drivers and horses, upset the guns into a ravine, and then swinging sharply to their left assailed Napoleon's great battery of eighty pieces. The Emperor ordered two regiments of Delort's cuirassiers to attack them; but, before these could move, the 3rd and 4th Lancers of Jacquinot's division fell upon the left flank of the British and bade fair to annihilate them. In no kind of order, and with horses blown and exhausted, the remnants of the Union Brigade could make little resistance nor even attempt to fly. Sir William Ponsonby was borne down and killed, and indeed few of them would have escaped, had not the Twelfth and Sixteenth Light Dragoons of Vandeleur's brigade come to their rescue, charged the French lancers in turn, and given their comrades some respite. Thus tardily and with difficulty the remnants of the two brigades crawled back to their places behind La Haye Sainte. Of two thousand troopers and horses that had charged, over one thousand horses and from seven to eight hundred men were killed, wounded and missing. The Twelfth Light Dragoons also had lost their Colonel, Frederick Ponsonby, who was desperately wounded, and the strength of a whole squadron either hurt or slain.

Over the greater part of the field there was now a lull; except for a continuous duel of artillery, while both sides regained their positions. D'Erlon's losses had been very heavy; and both Bourgeois's brigade and Marcognet's division were for the present unfit for further action. At least two thousand French prisoners had been captured. In one place their muskets lay in rows on the field as if they had been grounded by word of command; and the panic was so great that some of the fugitives ran as far as Genappe before they could be stopped.[1] Twenty or thirty French guns had been disabled. The eagles of the 105th and 45th were taken; and the moral effect of the charge of the Union Brigade was strong and permanent. On the other hand, Donzelot's division, though not unscathed, had retired in comparatively good order, and the Allies had paid a heavy price for their success. The two finest brigades of the British cavalry had almost ceased to exist; and there was a strong feeling that, if they had been supported, their success might have been more far-reaching and more permanent. Uxbridge, in fact, had been unable to resist the temptation of leading the first line of the Household Brigade himself; the Blues and the Greys, which he had designed to act as reserves, had both been drawn into the main attack; and at the critical moment there was no general director of the whole movement and consequently no support at hand to maintain the leading squadrons. Uxbridge reproached himself bitterly to the end of his days for his fault; but the mischief was done and could not be amended. Moreover, one Hanoverian battalion had been annihilated. Bijlandt's brigade, though the officers had wrought their utmost to hearten the men, was to all intent out of action; and hundreds of the Netherlandish soldiers were hidden away in the forest of Soignes, where they lay at their ease with piled arms, cooking their soup and smoking until the time should

1815. June 18.

[1] Houssaye, p. 356.

1815. come for them to advance in safety or to disperse to
June 18. their homes, as the fortune of the day might dictate.

Round Hougoumont the struggle never ceased to rage with extreme bitterness, as Foy and Jerome threw more and more of their battalions into the fight. Byng was obliged to relieve Saltoun by sending down his battalion of the Third Guards, which cleared the orchard by a counter-attack and, establishing itself along the southern hedge, restored security. Napoleon then sent a battery of howitzers to play upon the buildings, and, the shells setting fire to a barn, the flames rapidly spread to the mansion, stables and cow-houses. The garrison, reinforced by a battalion of Brunswickers and another of Duplat's brigade, none the less continued their resistance. The wounded lying in the burning buildings were left perforce to their fate in spite of many efforts to rescue them ; but the survivors fought on. The fire fortunately stopped at the chapel ; the French infantry, disheartened by many failures, no longer showed the same resolution in attack ; and, ensconced in the chapel and in such other out-buildings as had escaped destruction, the defenders held grimly on to Hougoumont.

CHAPTER XXVI

1815. June 18.

It was now about three o'clock. Wellington had brought Pack's brigade forward to take the place of Bijlandt's, summoned Lambert's brigade to the support of the Fifth Division, and closed in the whole of his left towards the centre. The Rifles also had re-occupied the mound at La Haye Sainte ; and two fresh companies had been sent into the buildings, the defence of the orchard being now abandoned. The Emperor now reinforced Reille's artillery by some of the Guards' twelve-pounders, making them up to thirty-four pieces, and ordered them, together with the grand battery, to play upon the right and left centre of the Allies. The cannonade was more intense than the oldest soldier among the Allies had ever experienced, and Wellington withdrew the first line along a great part of his left centre a hundred yards farther to the rear, so as to give them better shelter. Under cover of this shower of shot and shell Ney led Quiot's troops once more to the assault of La Haye Sainte, while one of Donzelot's brigades advanced, not in columns but in loose swarms, to cover his right flank. Once again the main attack failed before the steadfast defence of the German Legionaries under Baring ; and Donzelot's skirmishers, meeting Kempt's and Lambert's brigades half-way up the hill, were driven back before they could make any headway. In fact, the onset appears to have been half-hearted, perhaps because the French had not yet recovered from the

1815. June 18. shock of their previous repulse ; and in many narratives of the battle it is not even mentioned.[1]

The general retrograde movement of the Allied infantry upon the reopening of the cannonade had, however, caught the eye of Ney, who, misconstruing it as the beginning of a general retreat, conceived the idea of establishing a footing on the plateau with cavalry. He therefore summoned Farine's brigade of Delort's division of cuirassiers ; and, when Delort pleaded that he could take no orders except from Milhaud, who commanded the corps, the Marshal, much incensed, directed not only the brigade but the entire corps to advance with him. Lefebvre-Desnoëttes's light cavalry of the Guard followed likewise, with or without orders ; and eight regiments of cuirassiers, one of lancers and one of mounted chasseurs, five thousand men in all, trotted down to the low ground just to west of the Brussels road to form for the attack. Wellington and his staff stood amazed. He had looked, possibly, for a still more formidable assault upon Hougoumont ; and, as most of Byng's brigade had already been swallowed up by the first attack, he had brought forward four Brunswick battalions from Merbe Braine to fill the vacant place. But a charge of cavalry upon unbroken infantry seemed, after the experience of Quatre Bras, sheer madness. The infantry, drawn up by battalions chequerwise, received orders to form square, and the gunners were bidden to fire to the very last moment, and then to take shelter in the nearest squares, removing first the near wheel from every gun and trundling it before them to their refuge.[2]

Just before Ney set his cavalry in motion, Piré's horse made a demonstration with both squadrons

[1] See Houssaye, p. 364. The authorities quoted by him establish beyond doubt the fact that this second attack was delivered.

[2] This last detail is chronicled in the *Life of Sir William Gomm*, p. 373 ; but is probably best known to the mid-Victorian generation through the pages of Henry Kingsley's *Ravenshoe*.

and battery against the British right, drawing off the Thirteenth Light Dragoons and Fifteenth Hussars of Grant's brigade, as well as the Second Light Dragoons of the Legion, to oppose it. The trumpets then rang out, and the noble array of horsemen began to move, cuirassiers on the right, chasseurs and lancers on the left, in a north-westerly direction obliquely across the valley, so as to strike the Ohain road where it ran level with the rest of the ground. Their formation was in echelon of columns of squadrons,[1] with the right, presumably, leading ; and since their front, straitened as it was between Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte, can little have exceeded eight hundred yards, they must have presented an ideal target for artillery. Their advance cannot have been rapid, for the rye rose well above their girths,[2] and the ground beneath it, being still wet, must soon have been poached into deep mud. The pace too must have decreased as they breasted the hill, which no doubt soon became slippery, and such horses as had been loaded with their riders all night must speedily have flagged. The French artillery necessarily ceased firing as they ascended the ridge ; and the French cavalry's line being oblique to that of the Allies, Wellington's guns were able to pour a tempest of shot not only into their front but into their flanks, blasting away whole heads of squadrons when they came within close range. The French horsemen naturally wavered, for they could hardly move forward over the heaps of dead horses. Indeed, opposite Mercer's battery, not far from the north-eastern corner of the orchard of Hougoumont, the front ranks turned and, finding themselves pressed forward by the rear ranks, actually fought them with blows and curses in their eagerness to ride back ; 1815. June 18.

[1] Houssaye, p. 371.

[2] I never realised how immensely heavy were the rye-crops on the field of Waterloo until I found in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle nine water-colour drawings of the field, made by Denis Dighton on the days immediately following the battle—in fact, before the dead had been buried.

1815. June 18. while Mercer's nine-pounders, doubly loaded with case and round-shot, riddled the seething masses from end to end.

Elsewhere the French cavalry rode into the batteries, but found themselves none the better for it. They could not carry off the guns, and they possessed no means of spiking them. They could only pass through the intervals with ranks thinned and disordered, spur their horses into some semblance of a gallop and fall upon the squares. But, the farther they went, the more their front was contracted between the cuttings of the Nivelles road and the Brussels road, so that the squadrons became crowded together and their pace was checked. Moreover, the squares being arranged chequerwise, it was impossible to assail any one of them except under a flanking fire from others. Here, therefore, as at Quatre Bras, the French cavalry was reduced to an aimless wandering in and out of the squares, suffering very heavy loss and inflicting very little damage. Uxbridge meanwhile collected six regiments from the Brunswick cavalry, Grant's, Dörnberg's and Arentschild's brigades, with which, backed by three brigades of Netherlandish cavalry, he made a counter-attack, which swept the cuirassiers clean off the plateau into the dead ground under the southern slope of the ridge.

The Allied gunners instantly ran back to their guns and replaced the wheels; and meanwhile Wellington, ceasing to be anxious for his right, had considerably altered his dispositions in that quarter. Clinton's division was moved up from its place in reserve into the front line. Hew Halkett's Hanoverian brigade was placed as a support to the Brunswickers on Maitland's right; the Twenty-third from Mitchell's brigade was posted in the middle of the Brunswickers to give them the countenance of a veteran regiment; Adam's brigade was stationed on their right; and Duplat's brigade took up its position on the slope in rear of Hougoumont to be ready to reinforce that post.

These changes appear to have been completed when the French cavalry, having rallied with amazing quickness, appeared once again upon the comb of the ridge and renewed their attack. For the second time they trotted through an appalling fire of artillery into the deserted batteries and passed on to repeat their futile gyrations round and round the squares. Unable to pierce the hedges of bayonets, small parties of brave men engaged the red-coated infantry with their pistols, hoping to provoke the face of some square to waste a volley upon them and so to give a reserve, which was kept in rear of them, the chance of charging an array of empty muskets. Their efforts were fruitless. Not a red-coat fired except by word of command. The horses, by this time unable to trot, walked round and round the bayonets in helpless swarms till they were shot down ; and the second attack failed as completely as the first. The French cavalry, therefore, fell back down the hill ; and as they went, two columns of Quiot's and Donzelot's infantry, which had advanced against La Haye Sainte, fell back likewise ; while some battalions of Foy's division, which had crept up into the orchard of Hougoumont to turn the flank of the garrison, were driven back into the coppice by the Third Guards. 1815. June 18.

From the heights of La Belle Alliance the appearance of the opposite plateau, with the French horsemen swarming through the batteries and about the squares, apparently masters of the ground, made many of the French think that the victory was won. Napoleon himself may have thought so for a moment, but he was soon undeceived ; and Soult, who knew the ways of Wellington, was probably not deluded for an instant. The Emperor realised that Ney's attack had been premature, but, being committed to it, he decided to support it, and sent orders to Kellermann and Guyot to lead their ten regiments to the charge. Kellermann was inclined to demur ; but l'Héritier marched off his division at the trot without awaiting further orders,

1815. and Kellermann had no option but to follow with the
June 18. other. Napoleon, in his own narrative, declared that he wished to hold Guyot's brigade of the Guard in reserve, and tried to recall it; but it seems certain that he did nothing of the kind. Beyond doubt he hoped to gallop over the right centre of the Allies and finish off the battle without further ado; and he hoped so, because he was beginning to realise that, unless he could do so, he might sustain a disastrous defeat.

Blücher had overtaken Bülow's corps at Chapelle St. Lambert at about one o'clock and had at once sent out patrols to explore the passages of the Lasnes and of Paris Wood, which covered the ground for some fifteen hundred yards, north and south, beyond it. At about two o'clock, when Bülow's rear-guard was yet an hour's march away, the patrols returned with the report that the French were still at a safe distance; and the Field-marshal at once gave the order to march upon Plancenoit. The roads were infamous, the descent to the Lasnes being very steep and the ascent from the stream westward even steeper; and the men were weary after an exceedingly trying march, and weak from long fasting. It seemed hopeless to attempt to drag guns axle-deep in mud up so heavy an incline; but Blücher would hear of no difficulties. Along the line of march he was cheering and encouraging his men. "I have promised Wellington," he kept saying to them. "You would not have me break my word." His strong will and fiery energy stimulated even the most sluggish to extreme effort; and at about four o'clock the heads of his columns reached the western border of Paris Wood, where the two leading divisions halted in concealment. Blücher would gladly have waited for the rest of Bülow's corps to come up; but Wellington's messages, bidding him hasten, became more and more urgent; and at half-past four the two divisions, covered by two regiments of cavalry and three light batteries, emerged from the wood right and left of the Plancenoit road. His guns unlimbered

and opened fire upon Domont's squadrons, which, after a dash upon the Prussian hussars, fell back slowly, and then wheeling off right and left revealed Lobau's corps extended in two lines astride the road, about a mile and a half east of the highway to Brussels. Lobau, promptly taking the offensive, drove the Prussians back; and Blücher was fain to halt until the rear of Bülow's column should close up. 1815. June 18.

Blücher's guns must have been heard both by Wellington and Napoleon soon after half-past four. His first engagement with Lobau must have occurred between five and half-past five, just as Kellermann's and Guyot's squadrons were forming in the low ground, with the wreck of Milhaud's corps streaming back all round them. Milhaud's men quickly rallied behind the new array; and the whole moved forward once again, sixty squadrons some nine thousand strong, all cramped within a front which could barely have held nine hundred horsemen, knee to knee, without any intervals whatever. The French batteries, as before, preluded the attack by a terrific cannonade, which was continued to the last moment and ceased only as Kellermann's squadrons breasted the ascent. Advancing on the track of their predecessors, they could not move fast over ground poached deep by the trampling of thousands of hoofs, and fared no better than they. The front ranks were torn to tatters by the Allied artillery as they ascended the slope to the batteries, and, when the survivors had passed by the abandoned guns, they were sucked by a dozen channels into the intervals between the squares, where they eddied round and round them in streams and backwaters, now firing their pistols, now charging resolutely in small bodies, but always beaten off by the steady fire from behind the bayonets. There were squares that sustained many attacks, but it does not appear that one of them was broken.[1] There was no particular

[1] The French (see Houssaye, p. 383) claim to have broken two or three squares and to have taken two colours, one from a British

1815. June 18. reason why they should have been, for there was no thunder of hoofs growing momentarily louder, no wall of dust rushing steadily nearer, no awful emergence of maddened horses and gleaming blades in endless lines and waves from the dust-cloud, no element, in fact, of the terror which cavalry can strike into infantry even in the manœuvres of peace. Instead of all this there were simply swarms of exasperated men on weary horses, who walked round and round, fetlock-deep in mire, swearing loudly and making desperate thrusts from time to time through the hedge of bayonets, but doing very little harm and offering generally a capital target. The incessant procession of these walking cavaliers might have terrified young soldiers for a moment, but old soldiers never. Whether to young or to old it was an ordeal incomparably less trying than to lie down, either in line four deep or in square, amid the bursting shells and wicked ricochetting round-shot which earlier in the day had poured in an unbroken stream from the French batteries. Under such a fire men could only endure and hope, for there was no means of reply; but, within squares safely closed up, the disjointed attacks of walking cuirassiers

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battalion and one from a battalion of the German Legion. British and Legion, as is well known, have never admitted that a square was broken, much less that a colour was lost, at Waterloo. Vague claims to the capture of colours are too common in the reports of French officers during the Peninsular War to carry the slightest weight with me. The receipt of a captured British colour signed by Grouchy's aide-de-camp (quoted by Houssaye, p. 383) is something more definite, but would deserve greater credit if it stated the regiment to which the colour belonged. I have never heard of a colour lost at Waterloo; and, as the loss of its colour by the 69th at Quatre Bras was not concealed, I do not see how such a mishap could have been kept secret by any regiment. The 9th Cuirassiers, who claim to have taken a colour at Waterloo, were engaged at Quatre Bras and may have been the captors of the 69th's colour, which may have been handed over to Grouchy as having been taken at Waterloo. The 9th lost two officers at Quatre Bras and thirteen at Waterloo: and in the general disorganisation after the latter action the mistake could easily have been made.

were not very dangerous, and afforded endless opportunities for telling return blows. 1815. June 18.

Gradually the French horsemen began to retire down the slope, first in small parties, then in broken squadrons, and finally in complete masses. The British gunners rushed back to their cannon, but had barely time to fire a few rounds into the backs of their enemies before a fresh array came up the hill with its left close to the eastern fence of Hougoumont. This was Blancard's brigade of carbineers which Kellermann, with excellent judgment, had hidden in a fold of the ground during his advance, to act as a reserve. These now advanced up the height, backed, apparently, by a brigade of cuirassiers; but at this moment Grant, having undeceived himself as to the true intent of Piré's demonstration on Wellington's extreme right, had left one squadron of the Fifteenth to watch the French horse in that quarter, and returned to his original place in rear of Hougoumont. Forming the Thirteenth Light Dragoons in line he launched them at the flank of the carbineers, and a few minutes later directed the Fifteenth Hussars upon the flank of the cuirassiers. Both charges were successful, driving the enemy down the hill upon their main body. This last, however, having rallied, now with the greatest gallantry renewed its attack; and the Thirteenth and Fifteenth were compelled to fall back, which they did with great steadiness, to the rear of the infantry.

Once again the tide of the French cavalry surged into the intervals between the squares, flooding the space up to the bayonets but there stopping and rippling round them through channels now cumbered with the corpses of man and beast, powerless to break over the immovable boulders of red-coats. No men could have showed more persistent bravery than the French troopers; but they were opposed to adversaries as stubborn as themselves. After a time, as the more daring spirits were struck down, the attack became feebler and feebler. Riders and

1815. horses were in fact exhausted. The atmosphere was
June 18. still heavy and thunderous, and the crowding of a vast mass of men and horses, all alike heated by extreme exertion, made the temperature almost insupportable. A stream of dismounted cavaliers was constantly pouring to the rear ; small parties began to follow them ; the whole wavered irresolutely, then, upon the advance of the Allied cavalry, gave way and were swept over the plateau. Their losses had been frightful. Ney, having had three horses killed under him, was afoot, raging with fury. In Kellermann's corps both divisional generals and three brigadiers were wounded and the fourth brigadier was killed. In Milhaud's corps both divisional generals and three out of four brigadiers were wounded, and in the cavalry of the Guard General Guyot was wounded. Hardly a general officer was left standing, and there was not a regiment of cuirassiers which had lost less than a dozen officers. Nevertheless it seems that Ney gathered the wreck of them together for a fourth charge, which was as gallantly delivered as the condition of the horses would permit, but failed as completely as all the rest. The flower of the French cavalry had been wrecked upon a score of attenuated squares.

Ney now resorted to the tactics which he should have employed at first ; namely, to use infantry and cavalry in conjunction with each other. Wellington, anticipating some such design, had some time before ordered Chassé's Netherlandish Division to march to a hollow in rear of the Guards so as to liberate Duplat's and Adam's brigades for work in the front line, and had reinforced his artillery by two batteries. In due time two columns of Bachelu's and Foy's divisions, supported by cavalry, advanced against the centre of the Allied right wing under a heavy fire from the British guns. "It was a hail of death," wrote Foy afterwards ; and the French infantry quailed under it. Bachelu's men turned first and carried away Foy's in their flight. Foy himself was wounded, but rallied his men in the

ravine to the south of Hougoumont before he left the field. The attack was then renewed and was met and checked for a time by a charge of Somerset's Household Brigade. But Trip's Netherlandish cavalry, which were in support, refused to move forward ; and, when they saw the cuirassiers moving forward against them, they turned and galloped to the rear, greatly disordering the 3rd Hussars of the Legion in their flight. The 3rd, presently rallying, charged and broke the cuirassiers immediately opposed to them, but were enveloped by others upon their flanks and were fain to retreat to the rear of the squares with very heavy loss. Uxbridge then called upon another Netherlandish regiment, the Cumberland Hussars, to move forward ; but in this corps the rawness of the men was supplemented by the cowardice of their colonel ; and, in spite of all efforts to make them stand, even out of fire, these wretched creatures galloped off to Brussels, spreading panic as they went. Meanwhile, Wellington had ordered Duplat's brigade to reinforce the right centre ; and the rifle-fire of its four light companies compelled the line of French horse to withdraw. The remainder of the brigade then came up, together with Sympher's battery, and formed squares to resist the second line of French horse ; but the French skirmishers during the attacks of the cavalry had seized the opportunity to creep up under the eastern hedge of Hougoumont to the brow of the main position, from whence they poured in a most galling fire upon the squares. Duplat fell mortally wounded, and the horses of all the mounted officers were killed ; but it was impossible for the Germans to deploy, from fear of a charge from the enemy's cavalry. The charge was presently delivered, and was manfully beaten off ; whereupon the skirmishers swarmed forward again to ply the squares with bullets while the French mounted batteries unlimbered to scourge them with grape, so as to prepare the way for another charge. 1815. June 18.

Through this most trying ordeal the bearing of

1815. Duplat's battalions was wholly admirable; and presently
June 18. they were relieved by the advance of Adam's brigade, in two lines four deep, with Wellington himself at their head. The moment was most critical, for the gunners of the Allies had been driven from their guns, and the French skirmishers in great force had opened a very heavy fire upon Adam's advancing battalions. "Drive those fellows away," ordered the Duke calmly; and the Seventy-first together with the eight companies of the Rifles[1] obediently drove them from the crest, halted in a slight hollow near the north-east angle of the Hougoumont enclosures and formed squares, the Seventy-first on the right, the Fifty-second in squares of wings in the centre, and the Ninety-fifth on the left. They were promptly assailed by Guyot's brigade of the Imperial Guard, but they received them with volleys so telling that after several charges the French drew off, there being few but dismounted men left to retire. Two battalions of Hew Halkett's Hanoverian brigade then advanced to the southern slope of the ridge, taking post to the rear of Duplat; and the right centre of the Allies was thus firmly re-established.

Simultaneously Ney had directed a part of Donzelot's division upon La Haye Sainte. Baring, who was short of rifle-ammunition, sent urgent messages for a supply but could obtain none, though three additional companies were sent to reinforce his garrison. The French made a desperate attempt to break in by an unclosed doorway, opening on the south side into a barn, and, failing, set the barn itself on fire. With great readiness Baring ordered his men to fill their camp-kettles at a pond in the yard, and though many lost their lives in thus fetching water, he succeeded in extinguishing the flames. While these were thus desperately engaged with one party of the enemy, another swarm of French skirmishers advanced beyond the buildings on the western side, with the intention either of breaking in on the north side or of cutting off

[1] 2nd batt.: 6 cos.; 3rd batt.: 2 cos.

the post altogether from the main position. Thereupon the Prince of Orange ordered the 5th and 8th battalions of the Legion to deploy and advance ; and the brave Germans, hoping that there would now be an end of lying down under a heavy cannonade, ran eagerly forward driving the French before them. The 8th, which was in advance, was on the point of charging with the bayonet when a body of French cuirassiers, fresh from an unsuccessful attempt upon Kielmansegge's squares, suddenly burst upon their right flank by surprise and rolled them up from end to end. The unfortunate battalion was practically annihilated, most of its officers were killed, and the King's colour was captured. None the less the attack on La Haye Sainte was beaten off, and Baring with his noble garrison remained still in proud possession. 1815. June 18.

It was now not far from six o'clock, and in due course of time two more of Bülow's divisions had debouched from Paris Wood. Blücher resumed his advance against Lobau, but was met with so stout a resistance that he was fain to abandon his frontal attack and gain ground by manœuvring to turn his opponent's right flank. Lobau thereupon fell back to the level of Plancenoit, throwing one brigade into the village. Blücher then assaulted Plancenoit from three different points, drove out the French garrison, entrenched himself there, and bringing forward his artillery opened a cannonade, throwing some shot as far as the Brussels road. Twice during the course of these operations urgent messages came in from Thielmann at Wavre, saying that he was attacked by superior numbers and doubted his power to hold out against them. But Gneisenau had a great as well as a small side, and on this day the greatness was uppermost. "Let Thielmann defend himself as best he may," he answered ; "it is no matter if he be crushed, so long as we gain the victory here."

With a new enemy pressing upon his right flank and arrived within cannon-shot of his main line of communi-

1815. June 18. cations, Napoleon realised that no time must be lost. He gave orders to Duhesme's division of the Young Guard to retake Plancenoit, and directed Ney to master La Haye Sainte at any cost. Durutte he had already instructed to make a fresh attack upon Smohain, so as to take pressure off Lobau. Duhesme's eight battalions did their work nobly, driving the Prussians from Plancenoit with irresistible dash. Ney, hurrying to the head of the 13th Light, led them against La Haye Sainte ; and Baring called upon his men for yet another effort. It was a hard moment for him. The stock of ammunition was reduced to two or three rounds a man, and for some reason rifle-cartridges, though frequently and pressingly sought, were still not forthcoming. Not the less did his men promise cheerfully to stand by him to the last ; and this new onset of the French was met with the same gallantry as the first. Once again the barn was set on fire and once again the flames were extinguished ; but, as rifle after rifle fell silent for want of ammunition, the French gained ground. Baring, slowly retiring to the garden, made his men return singly to the main position, where they rejoined their regiments ; while he himself joined two companies of the 1st Light battalions close to the cross-roads. No men could have borne themselves more heroically than these defenders of La Haye Sainte ; but there was no disguising the fact that, though it was no fault of theirs, the key of Wellington's centre was lost.

Realising his advantage Ney begged the Emperor for fresh infantry to turn it to account. "Where am I to get them?" answered Napoleon testily. "Do you expect me to make them?"[1] There was nothing for it but to assemble the shattered remains of Donzelot's and Quiot's divisions, with the remains of the cuirassiers, to support the attack on the centre, while the remnants of Reille's corps were set in motion for

[1] Every one assigns a different time to this celebrated speech : but this seems to me the most likely moment.

a supreme attempt against Hougoumont. The actual victors of La Haye Sainte were able from the garden and buildings to command the knoll by the sand-pit with their fire, and to drive away the two companies of Riflemen which held it ; and then, bringing up two guns to the bank of the high road, they poured a storm of grape upon Kempt's brigade on the other side of it. The Riflemen speedily put a stop to this by picking off the gunners ; but fresh guns were brought up to a spur over against the middle of the British right centre, which played havoc with the Allied batteries. Now a fresh column of French issued from behind the farm and, extending into a close line of skirmishers, fell upon Ompteda's devoted brigade of the Legion. Alten sent orders to Ompteda to deploy, if practicable, and drive these tormentors off. Ompteda, knowing that cuirassiers were lying in wait in rear of the sharp-shooters, deprecated any such measure ; but at this moment the Prince of Orange rode up and, deaf to all protestations, peremptorily ordered Ompteda to deploy. Ompteda could only obey, and placing himself at the head of the 5th battalion led it forward to the charge. The French fell back to La Haye Sainte, where they took shelter among the enclosures ; and then, as Ompteda had predicted, a regiment of cuirassiers fell suddenly upon his right flank and swept his men out of existence. The Riflemen on the other side of the road, after long hesitation from fear of hitting friends as well as foes, now poured in a volley which staggered the cuirassiers ; and the 3rd Hussars of the Legion galloping forward cleared the whole front of Ompteda's brigade until compelled by the arrival of fresh bodies of French horse to retire. In this affray Ompteda, a most gallant officer, was killed, an immolation to the ignorance and self-sufficiency of the Prince of Orange. The Prince himself was presently forced by a wound to quit the field, and none too soon. In two days he had succeeded in destroying three good battalions of

1815. June 18.

1815. June 18. the British and German infantry, each one by the repetition of the same foolish mistake.

Another body of French skirmishers now turned north-west from La Haye Sainte, threatening alike Maitland's brigade, of which the Third battalion of the First Guards, formed in square, was posted in advance of the rest, and the square of Riflemen which formed the left of Adam's brigade. Both were suffering severely when Wellington ordered the Guards to deploy and charge, which they did, re-forming square instantly as the French cavalry came up. The latter shrank from the attack, but too late to escape from the bullets of the Guards; and then, losing their heads, they galloped along the whole front of the Fifty-second, losing scores of men from the fire of that regiment. The pressure upon the Guards was thus relieved; but immediately afterwards the principal onslaught upon Hougoumont was developed by Reille's corps. The mansion was by this time nearly burned out, but the outhouses, except on the south side, were still aflame; and the defenders were much harassed by the heat and smoke. Nevertheless their resistance was as strenuous as ever. The flank-companies of the Guards still held the walls and buildings. The Coldstream lined the hedge that bordered the main approach to the mansion. The Third Guards occupied the orchard, and, though driven back at first to the road beyond it, recovered themselves with the help of the light companies and the 2nd German battalion of Duplat's brigade, finally, after many vicissitudes of fortune, re-establishing their position at the front hedge of the orchard.

All therefore was well with Hougoumont; but all was not well in the centre. From the knoll above the sand-pit—their other point of vantage—the French skirmishers poured an active and deadly fire upon the troops right and left of the Brussels road. Kempt's and Lambert's brigades, though sorely tried, replied with spirit enough, though the Twenty-seventh, lying

in square in the north-eastern angle of the cross-roads, suffered terribly. But the survivors of Ompteda's brigade were beginning to steal to the rear, and it was evident that they were exhausted as a fighting force. He would be a stern judge that would blame them, for two out of the four battalions had been cut to pieces and the other two cruelly punished. Kielmansegge's young battalions also were much shaken. Alten, Colin Halkett and Ompteda had fallen; and Kielmansegge, who was striving desperately to rally his own men, was left in charge of the division. A dangerous gap was, in fact, opened and slowly widening in the British centre, and the situation was critical in the extreme. Somerset, with the wreck of his brigade extended in rank entire, so as to make a show, was endeavouring to instil confidence into the Hanoverians and to keep them in their places. He had been ordered some time before to withdraw and to take shelter from cannon-fire, but had answered that the slightest movement would make the Netherlandish cavalry, which were in support of him, turn and run. The situation was happily saved by Vivian, who, without orders, brought up his brigade of light dragoons and, forming them in rear of the wavering battalions, brought them to a stand; and Wellington presently brought up five Brunswick battalions from the second line to fill the gap more thoroughly. These last were not at first very steady; in fact they gave way in a body. They were not without excuse, for they were very young soldiers and they had been led straight into the post of greatest danger; but through the efforts of Wellington and other officers they were rallied. Vandeleur's brigade was presently sent up by Uxbridge to join Vivian; and a very dangerous crisis was successfully passed. 1815. June 18.

It was now seven o'clock; and meanwhile Blücher had not been idle. Rallying the repulsed battalions of Bülow's corps, he made a strong counter-attack upon Plancenoit, drove the Young Guard from it, and,

1815. June 18. again bringing forward his artillery, began to throw shot dangerously near to La Belle Alliance itself. Napoleon thereupon formed eleven battalions of the Guard in squares along the road from Rossomme to La Belle Alliance, and sent down two battalions of the Old Guard to retake Plancenoit. The veterans marched down in columns, plunged into the village without firing a shot, and in twenty minutes had swept every Prussian out of it, leaving it to be reoccupied by the Young Guard. Having thus, as he thought, cleared his right flank, Napoleon decided that the time was come for the final blow. He could see on his extreme right Durutte, already master of Papelotte and La Haie, preparing to ascend the slope, his own troops fighting strongly and with advantage in the centre, Hougoumont blazing on the left. All seemed to be well ; and after nearly eight hours of desperate fighting the supreme moment was at hand. He ordered Drouot to set nine battalions of the Guard in motion, keeping two at Plancenoit, and three in reserve ; and he himself rode down to lead the foremost of them into the valley. Reille and d'Erlon were instructed to advance simultaneously, with such troops as they could raise, upon the centre and upon Hougoumont.

But there was one thing which Napoleon did not and could not see. Soon after six o'clock Ziethen, after endless delays both in starting and in marching, had arrived at Ohain with his advanced guard—perhaps five thousand men—and had been met by Colonel Freemantle of Wellington's staff with a pressing request for an immediate reinforcement, even if of no more than three thousand men. Ziethen hesitated to comply until his whole corps should have come up ; and one of his staff-officers, galloping forward to judge of the reasonableness of Wellington's demand, found so many men, wounded and unwounded, making off, that he reported the British to be in retreat.

[1] *Waterloo Letters*, p. 330.

Shortly afterwards an order arrived from Blücher for the 1st Corps to join Bülow; and Ziethen naturally moved his troops in that direction. Müffling, however, perceiving him from a distance, galloped at the top of his speed to entreat him to join Wellington, and after much hesitation contrived to persuade him. But meanwhile much time had been lost; and the only advantage so far gained from Ziethen's arrival within two miles of Wellington's left was that Vivian had felt himself justified in quitting his post in rear of Smohain to reinforce the centre. It was not until the Imperial Guard was actually in motion towards the valley that Ziethen's leading troops at last debouched from Smohain. At the sight of them it seems that some of the French troops began to give way. The Emperor rallied them in person and sent aides-de-camp flying to all parts of his line to announce the arrival of Grouchy. 1815. June 18.

Wellington during this interval had brought forward Chassé's Netherlandish divisions from Merbe Braine to take the place of the Brunswickers in rear of Maitland and Colin Halkett; and he was apprised of the coming attack by a royalist colonel of cuirassiers who galloped up to Colonel Colborne of the Fifty-second and told him that Napoleon with his Guard would be upon them in half an hour. The Duke rode down the line between the Brussels and Nivelles roads ordering all battalions to be ranked four deep; and in this formation the infantry lay down, to avoid the cannonade with which Napoleon preluded his final advance, and awaited the storm. By this time six battalions of the Guard had reached the foot of the hollow. The Emperor left one of them [1] on a slight eminence midway between Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte; and the remaining five were ordered to advance in echelon from the right, the 1st battalion of the 3rd Grenadiers leading, followed in succession by the 4th Grenadiers, 1st and 2nd battalions of

[1] 2/3rd Grenadiers.

1815. June 18. the 3rd Chasseurs and a single battalion of the 4th Chasseurs.

Formed each of them in a dense column with a frontage of seventy to eighty men and a depth of at least nine ranks,[1] the five battalions moved off in superb order with two guns loaded with grape in the intervals between them, five Generals at their head, and Ney in front of all. Proceeding parallel to the Brussels road for some distance they found their front covered by d'Erlon's troops, which were engaged immediately to west of La Haye Sainte, and turned obliquely to the north-west, with the result that the right-hand battalion fell slightly to the rear of the rest. In this order they strode into the re-entrant angle formed by the British right centre.

By this time the Allied batteries in this quarter had suffered so much from loss of men and disabled guns that their fire had grown perceptibly weaker. Cleeves's and Kuhlmann's guns had actually retired to fetch ammunition ; Mercer's had grouped themselves into a strange heap, the men being too much exhausted to run them forward after each recoil ; and nowhere was shot any too plentiful. Happily Chassé, a very fine soldier who had won a great reputation in the French army, called up Van der Smissen's Netherlandish battery, which came galloping forward from the reserve, and unlimbering on the right of Lloyd opened a rapid fire immediately. The remainder fired round-shot and grape with all the energy of which their few harassed and weary gunners were capable ; and the Imperial Guards were seen to bend under the stroke like corn smitten by the wind. Still they never for a moment gave way, though, as the five battalions continued to advance over the miry ground under a

[1] Houssaye thinks that the Guard attacked in squares, and there is much evidence in favour of his contention. But although the fate of d'Erlon's corps may have suggested this formation, I think it more probable that the battalions were really formed in column of double companies, which would give them the frontage and depth above described.

continual tempest of shot, they lost their correct intervals and distances. The two right-hand battalions seem to have dropped somewhat in rear, the third and fourth battalions, reckoning from the right, united into one, and the left-hand battalion preserved its place slightly in rear of the centre. Hence, apparently, it was that the third and fourth battalions—the 3rd Chasseurs—were the first to come into action against Maitland's brigade of Guards. They could see nothing of the British line whatever except the guns, for all the red-coats were lying down ; and they had approached to within twenty yards when Wellington at last said, "Now, Maitland ! Now's your time !" Then the old story of the Peninsular battles was repeated. The Guards, four ranks deep, had a front of over two hundred and fifty men, the two columns of the Imperial Guard a front of perhaps one hundred and fifty. The red-coats poured in a volley from the two foremost ranks which tore the front and flanks of the French to tatters, and, with the two rearmost ranks to reload for them, continued to rain on their enemies a murderous shower of bullets. The senior French commanders fell among the first ; their men staggered, uncertain what to do next ; and the junior officers, instead of waving them forward to the charge, gave the order to deploy. It was the old mistake of Albuera. Such an evolution in the face of such a fire at close range was impossible. The flank-companies tried to come forward, but involuntarily shrank back before the storm of bullets. Hesitation became unsteadiness, and unsteadiness turned to disorder. Wellington and Saltoun gave the word to charge, and the red-coats lowering their bayonets rushed forward and hurled their enemies in confusion before them. 1815. June 18.

Observing the progress of the Guards, Halkett threw forward the Thirty-third and Sixty-ninth to protect their left flank ; and it was, apparently, while these two battalions were thus advanced that the two right-hand battalions of the French Guard approached

1815. June 18. Halkett's brigade. What happened at this point it is extremely difficult to ascertain. It seems that the French gave way before the first volley of the Thirtieth and Seventy-third, much to the surprise of the British,[1] but that their guns continued to play upon the red-coats with deadly effect. In an evil moment some one gave the order for the two British battalions to face about and take shelter under a bank in rear ; and the whole brigade rushed back in panic. For a short time they were so much crowded together that they could not move ; but, by the exertions of Halkett and their officers, they speedily recovered themselves, and, backed by Chassé's Belgians, repelled a second attack, either of these same battalions of the Guard or of some of Donzelot's troops. The whole incident is somewhat obscure, but it is certain that at this point of the Allied line there was great danger for a time ; and it seems probable that the first recoil of the Guard before the British volleys was due either to its previous losses from Van der Smissen's guns, or to the sight of their comrades retiring before Maitland's Guards.

Maitland's brigade, indeed, was following up its success triumphantly ; but, before it had advanced fifty yards, the brigadier observed the 4th Chasseurs—the left-hand battalion of the French array—coming up to the rescue of their comrades upon his right flank. He gave the word to retire, but his voice was lost in the din of battle, and the order came to his men in the shape of "Form Square." The flank-companies of his battalions accordingly doubled back to take their place in square. The officers, who saw the mistake, tried to set it right; and in the general bewilderment the whole brigade ran back, disordered by the incomplete manœuvre, to its original station, where it halted instantly at the word of command and re-formed with perfect steadiness and calm. Wellington, perceiving the mishap, ordered the Rifles of Adam's brigade to molest the flank of the 4th Chasseurs ; but

[1] *Waterloo Letters*, p. 330.

Colborne, anticipating him, led down the Fifty-second, and formed it, four deep, along the whole length of its flank, to "make the column feel his fire." Whether the 3rd Chasseurs had rallied in rear of the 4th, or whether some of Reille's troops had come up and joined it, is uncertain; but it should appear that there was certainly more than one battalion opposed to Colborne. As he formed his array the French opened a fire upon him which brought down one hundred and fifty men; but his answering volley was crushing, and was followed by a charge with the bayonet, under which the French broke and gave way. The Fifty-second now continued their advance straight across the battlefield from west to east, gradually inclining to their right as the French turned instinctively towards their original position at La Belle Alliance. The Rifles and Seventy-first were hastening to form on their left and right; and Colborne, bethinking himself of his danger from a possible attack of cavalry, was disposed to halt. "No, no," shouted Wellington. "Go on; go on." 1815. June 18.

The Duke was right. The defeat of the Guard had shaken the French in every part of the field. The long period of passive endurance was past, and the time for a general counter-attack was come. While the Imperial Guard was making its onslaught upon Wellington, part of Pirch I.'s corps had joined Blücher, who had promptly ordered a fresh assault upon Plancenoit. Ziethen in the meantime had beaten back Durutte, whose artillery had opened upon Smohain; and, as his infantry came up, drove him farther from La Haie and Papelotte. Wellington, leaving Colborne to take care of himself, ordered Vivian to move down across the scene of the conflict between the British and the Imperial Guard, so as to complete the discomfiture of the enemy, and then galloped, together with a single staff-officer, from Hougoumont to the left of his line to order a general advance. When he reached Kempt and Lambert and bade them move, Harry

1815. June 18. Smith, Lambert's brigade-major, was fain to ask in what direction the movement was to be, for there was for the moment a lull in the firing and the smoke was so thick that nothing could be seen. "Right ahead, to be sure," answered the Duke; and presently the smoke cleared away, and a gleam of light flashed down from the setting sun. The Duke raised his hat high in air, and at his signal the red-coats stirred at last from the ground to which they had been rooted, and broke into a majestic advance.

Under this combined counter-attack of the British, Hanoverians, Netherlanders and Prussians, the French gave way at every point.[1] Whole battalions, which had been brought back from La Belle Alliance after being engaged, left their arms piled and ran away. Wellington's progress exposed Durutte's flank to the onset of Ziethen; the defeat of Durutte uncovered the flank of Lobau; and by a supreme effort Blücher drove the Guard, after a most noble and glorious resistance, from Plancenoit. All was now confusion except in the three squares of the Old Guard which Napoleon had held in reserve, and in the single regiment of Horse-grenadiers. Vivian, after dispersing a mass of broken infantry, had charged and routed some cavalry that attempted to check him; and he now broke into one square of infantry and passed on, cutting down the fugitives by scores. Vandeleur followed him; and it was left chiefly to Colborne and the Artillery to deal with the squares of the Old Guard, which retreated steadily and in perfect order, frequently turning to bay. Shortly after nine Blücher and Wellington met near La Belle Alliance, and it was arranged that the Prussians should take up the pursuit. Vivian pleaded that his brigade was still fresh, but was met by the rejoinder that the British had done a hard day's work, and that he must put his men into bivouac. The energy and resource with which the Prussians pushed the pursuit has become a proverb; but indeed the panic was such

[1] Lord Ellesmere's *Personal Recollections of Wellington*, p. 101.

that there was little attempt at a rally. Napoleon him- 1815.
self, after journeying for a short distance in his carriage, June 18.
took to his horse again and so escaped capture. Little effort was made to check the pursuers at the defile of Genappe ; and, as no rear-guard had been formed, the task of the Prussian cavalry, lighted by the moon, was an easy one. Insatiable in their vengeance for many evils suffered since Jena, the Prussians pressed the fugitives hard. Nine several times the weary French tried to bivouac, to be roused up to renewed flight by the merest handful of men, indeed by the mere sound of trumpet or drum. The chase lay over the field of Quatre Bras, where the hideous spectacle of the still unburied dead struck the fugitives with fresh horror and panic. Not until he reached Frasnes did Gneisenau give the order to halt. The French army that had fought at Waterloo had, as a military body, literally ceased to exist.

CHAPTER XXVII

1815 June 18. The Allied troops bivouacked on the ground that they had won, all except the Thirty-third and Sixty-ninth, weak young battalions which, having been cruelly tried both at Quatre Bras and Waterloo, had reached the limit of their endurance. Wellington himself rode back silently at a walk to Waterloo followed by the remnant of his staff, one and all "wearing rather the aspect of a funeral train than of victory in one of the most important battles ever fought." Between ten and eleven[1] he reached the inn where were his head-quarters, and on dismounting patted his chestnut thoroughbred, Copenhagen, approvingly on the quarter. The horse, who had carried his master for fourteen or fifteen hours and must have galloped more miles than are generally traversed in the longest day's hunting, lashed out with his near hind leg as if he had only just left the stable; and this was the last danger that was escaped by the Duke on the 18th of June. He sat down to write his despatch; and later on, the first casualty-lists were brought to him. He listened as the long tale of names was read to him, and, before it was half rehearsed, broke down and cried. Fitzroy Somerset had been wounded by his side; two more of his personal staff, Canning and Gordon, had been killed; Barnes, the Adjutant-general, Elley his deputy, and De Lancey,

[1] Jackson (*Reminiscences of a Staff Officer*) says after ten; the Duke himself said, a year after the event (*Supp. Desp.* x. 509), between eleven and twelve.

the Quarter-master-general, had all of them been wounded, the last, as it proved, mortally. Among the generals, Picton, who had been struck by a bullet at Quatre Bras but had concealed the hurt, William Ponsonby, Duplat and Christian Ompteda had been killed; Uxbridge, together with all four of his aides-de-camp, Cooke, Kempt, Pack, Colquhoun Grant, Adam and Colin Halkett, had been wounded. Out of fifty assistants in the departments of the Adjutant and the Quarter-master-general, two had been killed and thirteen wounded. Of sixteen officers commanding regiments of cavalry, three had been killed and seven wounded; of twenty-five commanders of battalions, one had been killed and eleven wounded. In the four squadrons of the Life Guards thirteen officers had fallen; in the King's Dragoon Guards eleven, in the Royals thirteen, in the Greys sixteen, in the Seventh Hussars twelve, and in the Fifteenth Hussars nine. In the two battalions of the First Guards seventeen officers had been killed or wounded, besides fourteen at Quatre Bras; in the Coldstream ten, and in the Scots Guards twelve; in the Twenty-third, ten; in the Twenty-seventh, nine out of twenty present; in the Thirtieth, sixteen, besides two at Quatre Bras; in the Thirty-second, nine, besides twenty-two at Quatre Bras; in the Thirty-third, nine, besides twelve at Quatre Bras; in the Fortieth, eleven; in the Fifty-second, ten; in the Sixty-ninth, six, besides five at Quatre Bras; in the Seventy-first, fourteen; in the Seventy-third, seventeen, besides four at Quatre Bras; in the Seventy-ninth, thirteen, besides seventeen at Quatre Bras; in the Ninety-second, six, besides twenty at Quatre Bras; and in the two battalions of the Ninety-fifth,[1] thirty, besides four at Quatre Bras. Lastly, in the Royal Artillery, out of some eighty officers present, seven had been killed and fifteen wounded on the 16th and 18th, and among the slain was Major Norman Ramsay. 1815. June 18.

[1] There were present the 1st battalion, six companies of the 2nd, two companies of the 3rd.

1815. June 18. Nor had the men suffered less severely than the officers. In the Household Cavalry Brigade the non-commissioned officers and men killed and wounded numbered over one hundred and eighty ; and some two hundred and thirty were missing, having been taken prisoners. In the Union Brigade the dead alone exceeded two hundred and fifty and the wounded were little short of three hundred. The Twelfth Light Dragoons had over one hundred and ten casualties of all ranks, and the Seventh Hussars over one hundred and fifty. In the infantry, the Second battalion of the First Guards lost nearly one hundred and fifty non-commissioned officers and men, and the Third battalion three hundred and twenty-four; so that the First Guards lost altogether at Quatre Bras and Waterloo not far from eleven hundred rank and file out of two thousand present, and not a single man of them taken prisoner. The Coldstream lost two hundred and eighty-two and the Third Guards two hundred and fifteen rank and file out of about a thousand present, and escaped cheaply. Of the brigades that had been engaged at Quatre Bras, Halkett's began the battle of Waterloo with nineteen hundred and fifty bayonets and came out with fourteen hundred and thirty ; Kempt's with nineteen hundred came out with just over thirteen hundred ; Pack's with fourteen hundred came out with nine hundred and seventy-five. Among the individual battalions the Twenty-eighth had since the 16th lost two-fifths of its numbers, the Royals and Thirty-second one-half, the Forty-second, Seventy-ninth and Ninety-second considerably more than one-half. The battalions that were engaged at Waterloo only did not suffer so severely, except the eight companies of the second and third battalions of Rifles, which lost nearly one-third, and the Twenty-seventh, which, pent up in square by the cross-roads above La Haye Sainte, was cruelly punished without an opportunity of firing a shot in reply. Out of seven hundred rank and file

of the Twenty-seventh present no fewer than ninety-six were killed outright and three hundred and fifty wounded—a noble record of stubborn endurance. 1815. June 19.

The battalions of the German Legion and the Hanoverians had not escaped more lightly than the majority of the British, having most of them casualties varying from one-fourth to one-third of their strength; while the gaps in the 2nd Light Battalion of the Legion amounted very nearly to one man in two. The proportion of the fallen among the Brunswickers was on the whole slightly smaller, for, even reckoning their previous losses at Quatre Bras, there was not one in which the proportion of slain or hurt amounted to one-third of their strength. Nevertheless, among the eight battalions one showed nearly two hundred casualties, two over one hundred and seventy, and a fourth over one hundred and fifty. Of the Netherlanders it is more difficult to speak. The Prince of Orange stated their casualties at about forty-two hundred for the three days of the 15th, 16th and 18th of June; half of which, roughly speaking, were returned as "killed or missing" and the other half as wounded. From another table it appears that nearly sixteen hundred of the forty-two hundred were missing, and over twelve hundred slightly wounded. As the whole number of the British missing in the two actions little exceeded six hundred, and the majority of these were taken prisoners in the wild charge of the Household and Union Brigades of cavalry, there is evidently something here which needs explanation.

However, the main point was that Wellington's army had lost in all close upon fifteen thousand men, or not far from a fourth of its numbers, and that none the less it must continue to advance. So worn out was every soul after the battle that the chief artillery officer never thought of collecting the captured guns, which with characteristic arrogance and dishonesty the Prussians promptly appropriated to themselves.

1815. In deference to Wellington's protests, however, they
June 18. gave up half of these, which left one hundred and twenty-two pieces in the Duke's hands.[1] A weary staff-officer rode out at one in the morning of the
June 19. 19th, bearing a terse order for the troops to move to Nivelles at daylight;[2] and a few hours later the Duke betook himself to Brussels to see to various matters. A vast mass of stragglers of all nations had found their way to the city, some in charge of wounded men, more from unmixed solicitude for their own safety; and there were disorder and plundering among these gentry which needed suppression. Lastly, it was necessary to take some measures for the relief of the wounded and to detail a small party, both officers and men, from every regiment which had suffered heavily, to look after them. In Brussels the Duke stayed until the 20th, when he drove over in his curricle, wearing plain clothes, to join his army at Nivelles. The ground was still covered with the dead, and many French wounded were still lying among them, who bore their sufferings with admirable patience and received any help that could be given them with touching courtesy.

On the night of the 18th Bülow's corps of the Prussian army halted at Genappe, and Ziethen's on the Charleroi road a mile or two south of Plancenoit; while three brigades of Pirch I.'s corps marched for Wavre to the assistance of Thielmann. The last-named officer had been attacked by Grouchy late in the afternoon of the 18th, but had held his own fairly well against odds of two to one until nightfall. On the 19th, Grouchy, having checked a counter-attack, pressed Thielmann steadily backward along the Louvain road until in the course of the forenoon he heard of the result of the battle of Waterloo, whereupon he resolved to retreat at once to Namur. Pirch I., who had reached Mellery on the 19th, pursued

[1] Basil Jackson, *Notes and Reminiscences*, p. 84.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 66.

from thence on the 20th, and Thielmann likewise; 1815.
but the French reached Namur with little loss, and June 19.
Grouchy, crossing the Meuse, reached Philippeville on
the 21st, and went on his way unmolested.

The main armies of Blücher and Wellington marched on the 19th and following days, the former by Charleroi, Avesnes, Etroeung and Fesmy, the latter by Nivelles, Binche and Valenciennes, halting for a day on the 23rd. Le Quesnoi and Valenciennes June 23.
were blockaded by Wellington's troops, Landrecies and Maubeuge by the Prussians ; and it was decided by the two commanders to advance to Paris by the right bank of the Oise, as the defeated enemy were said to be assembling at Laon and Soissons. On the 24th Blücher resumed his march, having been joined June 24.
by Thielmann's corps, while Wellington halted at Le Cateau to await the arrival of his pontoon-trains. On the 23rd he had detached Colville's division and a few more troops to Cambrai, which had carried the place by escalade with trifling loss ;[1] and the town was set apart for the residence of King Lewis, who had re-entered France from Ghent. On the 26th the June 26.
Prussian advanced guard reached Compiègne, and Wellington's army was between Vermand and Péronne. This last place, being fully fortified, refused to surrender ; and the Guards were detached to storm it. The light companies crossed the drawbridge and blew open the gate, whereupon the Governor speedily agreed to a capitulation. On the 27th Grouchy with June 27.
a part of his army engaged the Prussians at Compiègne, but, finding himself outnumbered, fell back. He engaged them again on the 28th, and ultimately on June 28.
the 29th entered Paris, before the north side of which June 29.
the whole of the Prussians encamped that evening. Negotiations for an armistice had already been opened with Wellington by commissioners from the capital, but had been rejected until Napoleon should quit

[1] Eight killed, twenty-nine wounded. The troops engaged were the British battalions of Colville's division.

1815. Paris, which on this same day he did. But even so,
June 29. Paris was not yet taken, and Wellington considered an attack with the forces at his disposal very hazardous.[1] The French troops, with the help of the lines thrown up on the heights from Montmartre to Belleville, could still have checked the advance of the Allies; and it was therefore resolved to send the Prussians round to the south side of the city, which was unfortified.

June 30. Accordingly on the 30th of June and the two following days the Prussians marched round, not without some sharp fighting both on the 1st and 2nd of July; Wellington moved his troops into the places
July 3. vacated by the Prussians; and on the 3rd, in consequence of overtures from the Provisional Government, a convention was signed under which the Allies agreed to suspend hostilities upon the surrender of Paris, and the French army retired to the Loire.

It was no doubt a relief to Wellington to be quit of the campaign without more fighting, for, if he had thought ill of his army before Waterloo, he thought still worse of it after, when all the best of the men had been killed or disabled. From want of carriages and drivers he could not carry with him one-fourth of the necessary ammunition; and his staff, its most efficient members having been slain or hurt, was useless. Above all, the behaviour of the Netherlanders, now the greatest part of the army, was infamous. Neither officers nor men would stay with their companies on the march. They wandered from house to house, not excepting Wellington's own head-quarters, robbing, destroying and plundering, forcing the sentries, rescuing the prisoners, and committing every description of outrage. In fact, they were simply a rabble, and for military purposes valueless. Wellington at daybreak of the 26th had ordered a brigade of the Netherlandish infantry to Péronne to support the assault. They arrived at nine o'clock in the evening,

[1] Wellington's Despatch to Blücher, 2nd July 1815.

an hour after the Guards had taken the place ; but a few Belgian cavalry were on the spot, who, after the capitulation was signed, cut the ropes of the drawbridge and broke violently into the town. The British staff-officer, who had arranged the terms, ordered them out, whereupon the ruffians tried to cut him down, and the French Governor was actually obliged to draw his sword to protect him. The Belgian soldier, properly disciplined and led by good officers, has deservedly won high reputation on many fields ; but in 1815 he was neither disciplined nor controlled, and it is idle to pretend that such levies were of any military worth. Such incidents as these prove that the contemporary narratives of Belgian misbehaviour at Waterloo are absolutely true, and they are not to be refuted by specious apologies proffered after the convenient lapse of a century. It is, however, fair to add that the Prussians behaved as ill or worse, both before and after the capitulation of Paris. They had, it is true, old scores to pay off, but this was no excuse for behaving, as Wellington put it, like children. "Among the officers of the Allied troops," he wrote, "the strongest objections are entertained to anything like discipline and order"; and this defect caused him not only disgust but not a little alarm. "If one shot were fired in Paris," he wrote to Castlereagh on the 14th of July, "the whole country will rise against us." [1] 1815.

On the 6th of July the Prussians occupied Paris, while Wellington's army stayed outside. Blücher wished to levy a huge contribution and, from mere rage at the name, to blow up the bridge of Jena. Wellington dissuaded him from the former project until the Allied Sovereigns should arrive, and meanwhile posted a British sentry on the bridge. This did not prevent the old Marshal from trying to blow July 6.

[1] *Wellington's Despatches.* To Castlereagh, 14th July; to the King of the Netherlands, 18th July; to Bathurst and to Sir H. Wellesley, 20th July; to Torrens, 1st Aug. 1815.

1815. it up, British sentry and all ; but the Prussian engineers failed on the Seine as they had failed on the Sambre from sheer ignorance of their business. And then came the bitter battle of the diplomatists on the terms of peace ; Prussia and the German States clamouring for the dismemberment of France and for a gigantic indemnity ; the Tsar, Castlereagh and Wellington, and later Metternich, standing up strenuously against
Nov. 20. them. On the 20th of November peace was at last signed. France agreed to the cession of Condé, Givet, Charlemont, Philippeville, Mariembourg, Sarrelouis, and Landau, and to the dismantling of Hüningen. The indemnity to be paid by her was fixed at twenty-eight millions sterling ; and it was arranged that for five years an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men[1] should occupy certain places in France at France's expense, the whole being under the command of the Duke of Wellington, with headquarters at Cambrai, for the term of occupation. Martinique and Guadeloupe, which had been occupied in June and August by General Leith, the former bloodlessly, the latter after a little fighting which cost the British about seventy killed and wounded,[2] were both of them restored to France.

So ended this long and desolating war ; and it remains only to recount briefly the fate of some of the principal actors therein, and to review the final campaign. Murat, in a fit of madness, disembarked on the coast of his lost kingdom and was captured and shot on the 13th of October. Ney having been

[1] English, Headquarters Cambrai 30,000
Wurtemburgers, Headquarters Weissenberg . . 5,000
Russians, Headquarters Maubeuge 30,000
Danes, Headquarters Lewarde 5,000
Prussians, Headquarters Sedan 30,000
Hanoverians, Headquarters Tourcoing . . . 5,000
Austrians, Headquarters Colmar 30,000
Saxons, Headquarters Condé 5,000
Bavarians, Headquarters Pont-a-Mousson . . 10,000

[2] The troops engaged were the 63rd, York Chasseurs, West India Rangers, and York Rangers. The 63rd had 25 casualties.

arrested and condemned to death, was shot on the 5th of December. He had sought the honourable end, that was his due, a thousand times throughout the long agony of Waterloo ; but the cruel fate which killed five horses under him reserved the rider for the bullets of a French firing-party. He lives immortal as the bravest of the brave. Soult fled after Waterloo and remained in banishment until 1819, when he began a new career in the service of France. Of him, as of Marmont and of Victor, we may perhaps hear again. Masséna, worn out by work and wounds, died in 1817. He will always be remembered in England as the general who, even in the years of his decadence, never failed to appear where Wellington least wanted to see him, and evoked the unstinted admiration of the entire British army by the masterly skill of his retreat from before Torres Vedras. 1815.

Napoleon himself, after leaving Paris on the 29th of June, set out for Rochefort with some idea of sailing for America. He reached the port on the 3rd of July, and, yielding to the pressure of the Provisional Government, embarked on the 8th. For some days he waited, forbidden to set foot again in France and yet not daring to put to sea in face of the British cruisers ; and on the 13th he wrote his well-known letter of surrender to the Prince Regent. The original document lies before me as I write, the text in the hand of some amanuensis, firmly written but containing one grammatical error, the signature bold and far more legible than usual, as if to mark with dignity the close of a transcendently great career. On the 15th he embarked on board the *Bellerophon* and was carried to Torbay. There had been wild talk of putting him to death ; and Liverpool wrote flatly that he wished the King of France would hang or shoot him, as the best termination of the business ; but Wellington had no intention of playing the part of hangman, and the British Government had no idea of calling upon him to do so. Since, however, it was

1815. necessary for the peace of Europe that he should be kept in safe custody, it fell to England, as practically the only possessor of distant islands and of a fleet that could ensure their safety, to take charge of him. He claimed the right to live quietly in England ; and, a rumour having got abroad that he was to be sent to Fort George at the mouth of the Inverness Firth, the Inverness Local Militia joyfully volunteered to act as his guard.[1] But before the end of July his place of confinement had been determined, and sailing in the King's ship *Northumberland* he landed on the 16th of October at St. Helena.

At the pitiful spectacle of a great genius descending to occupy itself with the pettiest of petty tricks, intrigues, and mischiefs I am not minded even to glance. I have as little wish to study the vast fabric of lies, misstatements, misrepresentations and calumnies that the idle hands at St. Helena took such pains to rear to the honour, as their littleness conceived it, of their royal martyr, and to the shame of his honest and upright custodian. Least of all would I call to remembrance the degrading use to which Whig politicians turned the name, which had made all Europe tremble, to the despicable ends of party strife. It is enough that Napoleon ended his life, by his own choice, without dignity and without resignation. Though a very great captain and a very great administrator, he was always an adventurer and, after his rise to supreme power, always a gambler. From 1803 onward he was continually playing double or quits until he had exhausted the favours of fortune ; and, when she turned against him and all hope was gone, he could not school himself to accept her buffets with a smile. On the 5th of May 1821 the end came, and he was carried to his grave by twelve grenadiers of the Twentieth Foot, no unworthy bearers, for some of them had faced the brave soldiers of

[1] Record Office, H.O. Internal Defence, 322. Lt.-Col. Rose to Sec. of State, 1st Aug. 1815.

Imperial France at Maida, Vimeiro, Coruña, Vitoria, in the bitterest fights of the Pyrenees, at Orthez and at Toulouse. 1815.

The campaign of Waterloo has been made the subject of whole libraries of books in all languages, and has been subjected to examination so microscopic as to be without parallel in military history. The reasons are readily found. The story is alluring in the first place, because it is that of the end of a great European cataclysm, and because the last act of the drama brought all the foremost actors of the time upon the stage. But its greatest attraction is that it only lasted four days, and may therefore be exhausted with a comparatively small amount of labour. Whether the excessive toil expended upon it has really made it clearer and more intelligible than other campaigns, may well be doubted. Writers have too often approached it with some ulterior object, to illustrate some theory of war or strategy, to glorify the share taken by their own nation or even by their own regiment, to explain the defeat of Napoleon, to minimise the success of Wellington, to exalt one commander, to abase another, to prove that, if something had not happened, the result would have been very different, and so forth. To such mistreatment many, indeed the majority, have added the mistake of regarding it as an isolated event, whereas, to take one detail only, it is impossible for one who has not deeply studied Graham's campaign of 1814 in the Netherlands, to understand how bad Wellington's troops really were. But, after all the study and research expended upon the four days of the 15th to the 18th of June 1815, and the new material which it has produced, it must be confessed that the literature of Waterloo is more prolific of new conjectures than of new facts. We know that certain orders were issued on both sides, and that certain messages were sent and

1815. delivered. But what other orders or messages, verbal or in writing, may have passed, when the said messages were despatched, when they were delivered, and whether the watches in the French, Prussian, British, and Netherlandish Armies kept uniform time or varied by half-an-hour, we do not know and shall never know. Wellington warned aspirant historians against inquiring too much, on the ground that such a course would lead to bewilderment rather than truth; and he was quite right.

The main facts are simple enough. Napoleon with one hundred and twenty-five thousand men set out to fight Blücher and Wellington with two hundred and fifty thousand. The two latter had dispersed their armies in cantonments over a very wide front, and Napoleon hoped by stepping in between them to beat them in detail before they could unite, and indeed before either of their armies could be fully concentrated in itself. The first stage, that is to say, the work of the 15th of June, may be called completely successful. Everything indeed did not pass exactly as Napoleon had designed—that is the rule rather than the exception in war—but it may be said that the British and Prussian commanders were surprised on the 15th. In the details of their concentration bad mistakes were made both by the Prussian staff and by the British commander; but the worst mistake of the latter was set right by his Netherlandish subordinates, Constant and Perponcher, who saw the importance of clinging to Quatre Bras. On the 16th it was Napoleon who was surprised. He expected to reach Gembloux on one side and Brussels on the other without serious fighting, and he found himself set down to two pitched battles. It is urged with justice that, if d'Erlon's corps had not been kept walking to and fro all day between the two battle-fields, the issue might have been very different; and a vast deal of ingenuity has been expended to account for d'Erlon's conduct. But the explanation is very simple. D'Erlon

was badly needed upon both battle-fields owing to the huge initial superiority of the Allies over the French in the matter of numbers. The Emperor had misread the entire situation, and had confused all his commanders by imposing his misreading upon them. Yet even so Napoleon was fortunate in the fact that Blücher chose a bad position and occupied it vilely ; for Ligny, or the equivalent to Ligny, would have resulted very differently if Wellington had been in command of the Prussian Army. On the other hand, it was unlucky for the Emperor that Wellington was in command at Quatre Bras, for no other General could have handled the early stage of that critical action with such consummate skill, and no troops but the British, fighting under his command, could have made so stubborn a resistance in the face of so heavy punishment. 1815.

At nightfall on the 16th, therefore, Napoleon had lost a great number of men and had accomplished very little. The Prussians had indeed been beaten, but not very severely ; and though ten thousand soldiers of the corps that had suffered most heavily had dispersed, there was one more corps which had been little engaged, and another that had not been engaged at all. It suited Napoleon's preconceived ideas to assume that the Prussians were retreating, without thought of further contest, to the eastward, and that five-and-thirty thousand men would be sufficient, if not to hunt them beyond any sphere of usefulness, at any rate to hold them in check until he should have disposed of Wellington. But here we find the confusion of thought due principally to imperfect intelligence, which vitiated every measure taken by Napoleon after the initial stage of the campaign. Thirty-five thousand were fewer than were necessary to paralyse the Prussians if they were not thoroughly beaten, but more than were necessary to keep them running if they were.

On the French left wing Ney has been much blamed for not attacking Wellington earlier, in order to make

1815. his retreat difficult if not impossible. But it is plain that Ney was thoroughly bewildered by the course which events had taken. An easy, almost unopposed, march to Brussels had been prescribed to him in the first instance, instead of which he had been stopped before he had advanced two miles, and had only been able to hold his ground with great difficulty and serious loss. He could not fail to infer that the Emperor had made grave miscalculations at the very outset of the campaign, that his plans would need revision. The Marshal had received a great many contradictory commands on the 16th, and the general result had not been satisfactory. The Allied armies were, according to Napoleon's design, to have run away in different directions as soon as the French host appeared ; but they had not run away. They had fought desperately, though disunited. One of them had held its ground, and the defeat of the other had not been even reported to Ney until twelve hours after the event. A signal success does not generally take so long to make itself known ; and Ney may well have had his doubts as to the plight of the right wing. There were, in fact, signs of uncertainty and hesitation in the mind of the Commander-in-Chief, easily intelligible in one who had started to fight against an army of twice his own strength, but not calculated to inspire his subordinates with confidence.

The thunderstorm on the 17th was a complication decidedly in favour of the Allies ; but, if we are to go back over past campaigns and alter the weather from day to day, we shall only lose ourselves in unprofitable conjectures. It was open to Napoleon to turn the bulk of his force upon Wellington at Quatre Bras quite early in the morning of the 17th ; and, if he had done so, it is probable that no weather could have saved the campaign from ending very differently. But he did not do so, and when at last he made up his mind to fling himself upon Wellington's rear-guards, it was too late. Meanwhile it is to be noted that the chance of catching Wellington at a disadvantage was

due to the neglect of Blücher's staff to apprise the Duke of the Prussian retreat after Ligny. But war is a chapter of accidents ; and any other campaign, if put under the microscope, would show as many as that of Waterloo. 1815.

The most remarkable point in the whole story is Wellington's nerve in accepting battle with a very bad army, before he had actually effected his junction with Blücher. It is not impossible that he was prompted thereto by the desire to choose his position for himself and to defend it according to his own ideas, after experience of the Prussian dispositions at Ligny. Yet he took a tremendous risk, for the best of his troops had been very roughly handled at Quatre Bras, and the worst were so bad—not because they were cowards, but because they had no heart in their work —that no reliance could be reposed upon them. The excellent battalions of the German Legion were from the first lamentably weak in numbers ; the best of the British had been very seriously diminished by their losses at Quatre Bras ; and the Hanoverians and Brunswickers, the latter of whom had also suffered considerably, were very young and raw. Altogether, reckoning only the troops which he could trust, more or less, he engaged Napoleon at the odds of two against three. In the matter of guns Napoleon had the advantage of about eight pieces to five in numbers, and of weight of metal into the bargain, for the Emperor, it will be recalled, had several batteries of twelve-pounders, whereas the Duke had nothing heavier than nine-pounders. Everything, therefore, was in Napoleon's favour, except that he was opposed to a strange enemy, whom it pleased him to assume to be similar to all other enemies that he had met. He did not realise that he was matched against a commander who, in the actual direction of a battle, was his equal if not his superior; that the British infantry was as tenacious as the Russian, but far more active and far more formidable with the musket; and that both the

1815. commander and his troops had been well schooled by experience to meet the somewhat crude tactical methods of the French army.

The details of the battle itself, except in its broad lines, are, as usual, so much complicated by conflicting narratives as to defy all attempt to unravel them. It is impossible even to be perfectly sure of the number of battalions of the Imperial Guard which took part in the final attack, much less of their formation and of the portion of the Allied line that was struck by any particular battalion. Only staff-officers can ever catch a general view of any action ; a great number of these were killed or wounded in the course of the day upon both sides, so that they could only give either imperfect narratives or no narratives at all ; and all witnesses agree that the smoke was so dense that the regimental officers always, and the staff-officers for the most part, were working in the dark.

However, Napoleon pursued his usual method of making a great bustle from end to end of his enemy's line, so as to bewilder him as to the true point of the attack ; but it was a new thing to him to fight against an enemy which, as a tactical principle, was kept out of his sight, according (to quote the words of General Foy) to the excellent custom of the English. It may well be, therefore, that he had his own share of bewilderment. Be that as it may, it is certain that his attacks were incoherent—what he would have called *décousus* —though this was a fault which, in general, his worst enemies would have hesitated to attribute to him. We may therefore set down to his subordinates the blunder which converted the advance against Hougoumont from a secondary into a primary operation. But the onslaught of d'Erlon's corps upon the centre, which was really the most serious movement of the whole day, might surely have merited some little personal attention from the General-in-Chief. There were at least three French generals in the field who could have warned Napoleon that an attack upon British

infantry in line by battalions in close column, without space to deploy, had again and again been tried and found wanting. It is true that the assault was finally routed by a charge of British cavalry ; but this too might have been foreseen since the day of Salamanca. There can be little doubt, I think, that this charge had its effect upon the French infantry all through the day. Nothing serious was attempted over the scene of the Union Brigade's attack ; and, according to many good authorities, the Imperial Guard did not venture to make its final advance except in squares. 1815.

After the failure of d'Erlon, came the great mistake of attacking unbroken infantry with cavalry only, an idea which apparently was instilled into the brain of Ney by the sight of British battalions retiring from the crest of the hill to the reverse slope. This blunder on Ney's part and its disastrous consequence must be placed to the credit of Wellington and of the unseen array which he alone among his contemporaries employed when defending a position. Last came the most trying ordeal of all for the Allies—incessant raids of cavalry and infantry, sometimes supported by cannon at close range, and launched at many different points upon the British squares after a pitiless rain of shot and shell from Napoleon's massed batteries. The constancy and steadfastness of British, Hanoverians and Brunswickers under this trial, especially after the capture of La Haye Sainte had enabled the French to enfilade a part of their line, was beyond all praise. More than one battalion broke, and indeed ran, when brought into the fighting-line under that terrible fire. But they rallied and came back ; for, wherever weakness was, there by magic appeared Wellington, perfectly calm and collected, inspiring all with confidence and fortitude. He said himself that he personally had saved the battle four times, and, if he had said forty times, he would not have overstated the truth. The men would have been glad enough to advance. What they found so hard to endure was the incessant fire of

1815. artillery to which they could make no answer. But they were bidden to stand, and, with Wellington to command them, they did stand. The miracles wrought by his presence and personality among a host of raw troops throw into the background the amazing patience and firmness with which, through hours of awful anxiety, he bided his time and forbade any movement until the Prussians should come up. Much is justly made of Blücher's exhortation to his troops to enable him to keep his promise to Wellington. Too little is said and thought of the silent influence and example by which Wellington infused ever fresh courage into a thin line of wavering recruits, and fairly forced them to keep his promise to Blücher. Without his presence and that of the officers and men whom he had taught to meet the legions of France, not only without fear, but with full confidence of victory, Waterloo had been lost.

The final issue of the day was of course decided, as Wellington was the first to acknowledge, by the advent of the Prussians, which was due wholly to the energy of Blücher. With proper management they should have arrived on the field at two ; as things fell out, they did not appear until half-past four and did not make their presence seriously felt until seven. But they won their way through Plancenoit only by strenuous and desperate fighting, which cost them between six and seven thousand killed and wounded and missing. Their casualties, in actual fact, actually exceeded those of the British, strictly so called ; as well they might, for they had many more troops present ;[1] and a comparison of the casualty lists sets forth some curious details. The British officers killed numbered eighty-three, the Prussian twenty-two ; the British officers

[1] The British engaged at Waterloo (*Wellington Supp. Desp.* x. 460-461) numbered 23,991 rank and file, or, adding one-eighth for other ranks, roughly 27,000 men. Bülow's corps at the opening of the campaign numbered 30,000 and Pirch I.'s 31,000. Deducting one-third from these figures as a handsome allowance for casualties and absentees, there are left at least 40,000 men.

wounded three hundred and sixty-three, the Prussian two hundred and eighty-six. The tale of the privates is as follows: killed, of the British twelve hundred and forty-five, of the Prussians eleven hundred and twenty-two; wounded, of the British forty-two hundred and sixty-one, of the Prussians thirty-eight hundred and sixty-nine; missing, of the British five hundred and fifty-eight, of the Prussians thirteen hundred and five. These figures do honour to both parties, but leave little doubt upon whom the brunt of the fighting fell; though the credit for one of the most successful pursuits in military history belongs wholly to the Prussians, and in particular to Gneisenau. 1815.

The losses of the French were appalling. The only means of judging them are from the published lists of the fallen officers, which are most pitiful to read. Never did the French soldier cover himself with greater glory than at Waterloo, his persistent gallantry in attack being beyond all praise. The weak point of the Army was its indiscipline. A large proportion of the men were old soldiers, very many of them released prisoners from various countries. They had not had time to settle down under the rule of their idolised leader; and, as they themselves had restored him, they and the junior officers were inclined to look upon themselves as the real masters of the situation. The general officers had many of them reconciled themselves with the Bourbons. They were sick of war. They pined for a little peace and quiet and, being of longer sight than the men, doubted the issue of Napoleon's usurpation. Thus there was some suspicion in the lower ranks towards the higher, and no perfect sympathy between them. This probably accounted for the incoherent nature of the principal attacks both in general and in detail. If one general hung back, from reasons of sound military prudence, another in his heart accused him of treason and hurried him on. So too in the charges of the French cavalry, every squadron-leader took matters into his own hands and

1815. attacked upon his own account, fearful lest his colonel should be lukewarm in the fight ; and thus there was no grand overwhelming onslaught made at any time in the day. Hence, when the Prussians arrived upon the field in force instead of Grouchy, as the Emperor had announced, there was a general cry of treachery ; and the army, saving a few choice regiments, fell into dissolution. Discipline was always the weak side of the Napoleonic armies, and at Waterloo the defect proved fatal. None the less the French approved themselves most noble fighting-men.

There has been much speculation as to the possible issue of the fight if the Prussians had failed to arrive on the field. This is hardly profitable, because Wellington only accepted battle on the understanding that Blücher would support him ; and we have seen how loyally both chiefs stood by their agreement. There can be no doubt that many even of the better Allied troops had been tried almost to the limit of their endurance, and that there were others besides the Netherlanders who quitted the field without the Netherlanders' excuse. Wellington in a letter to Lord Mulgrave six months after the battle declared himself ill-pleased with the conduct of the Artillery, alleging that, instead of taking refuge in the squares when the French cavalry charged, they ran off the field, taking with them limbers, ammunition and everything. The Royal Regiment has never forgiven the Duke for this letter, which indeed seems to be one of those sweeping indictments to which the great man was too much prone in moments of impatience. Whether there was one unfortunate battery which so misconducted itself, and, if so, which battery it was ; or whether the whole accusation arose out of some mistake, some misconception or some misrepresentation, it is impossible to say. Wellington averred that, when the French cavalry fell back, there were no artillery to fire at them ; but I can find no evidence of this, though plenty against it. Altogether it seems

to me that this letter must be set aside as too hasty to be accurate. 1815.

There was some complaint also of the Light Cavalry on the right wing. Uxbridge rode up to the Guards of Maitland's brigade and said, "Well done, men. By God, we stand on you. If I could only get my fellows to do the same! But by God, they won't budge—but I'll try again." The writer to whom we owe this detail[1] adds that the Light Cavalry in that part of the field were of little profit, partly because they were brought up for small isolated attacks instead of in a mass. This, however, is quite unconfirmed, rather indeed contradicted, by other authorities; and it is probable that Uxbridge was speaking of some of the foreign cavalry which, it is well known, refused to follow him. In the infantry, as we have seen, there was at one moment a panic in Halkett's brigade which, however, soon gave place to order. Much has been written about the number of fugitives, chiefly, but by no means exclusively, Netherlanders, that thronged the road to Brussels; but this is due, I think, to the facts that the number of wounded was very great, and that there was more than the usual number of spectators in the rear of the army. Craufurd had much the same story to tell when he came up to Talavera. On the whole, therefore, I doubt whether the Allies were so much shaken at the close of the battle as French writers have been disposed to think. Up to the very end the French skirmishers tried in vain to tempt the British squares to fire a volley at them which might give a chance to the French battalions to charge while the British muskets were empty. A few picked marksmen alone answered the sharpshooters, and the remainder coolly waited for the word of command to fire.[2] Troops that, after hours

[1] MS. Journal of Colonel James Stanhope.

[2] Stanhope tells an amusing story which illustrates the perennial strife between staff-officers and regimental officers. Captain Horace Seymour, one of Uxbridge's aides-de-camp, seeing that the Guards

1815. of harassing attack by all three arms, are still so perfectly under control cannot be considered shaken.

It must be noticed too that, owing to Wellington's admirable husbandry of his reserves, he had still, before the French attacks ceased, Vandeleur's and Vivian's brigades of cavalry, two battalions of Mitchell's brigade of infantry and the Hanoverian brigades of Vincke and Best practically untouched, while the Fourth and Fortieth regiments of Lambert's brigades, the former fresh from work in America, had suffered indeed considerable loss, but nothing so serious as to impair their fighting powers. Colonel James Stanhope, who had exceptionally good opportunities for forming a judgment, thought that even without the Prussians the Allies would have held their ground, and made their final short advance to La Belle Alliance on the 18th ; but he admitted that it was doubtful whether the French or the Allies would have retreated on the 19th. Had Wellington retreated, the Forest of Soignes was easily traversable by troops of all arms, and the border would have made a good defensible position for the rear-guard. Whether Stanhope's opinion were correct or not, it is impossible to say and unprofitable to argue. All that can certainly be said is that, when the battle ended, both armies were rapidly reaching the end of their powers, and that the ammunition of the French artillery was failing.[1] The French had endeavoured at the outset to carry matters forward with a rush, and their failure had cost them very dear. Thenceforward their efforts, though rather more methodical, had still for various reasons continued to be incoherent. The Emperor appears never to have had complete control of the battle ;

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left the fire of the French skirmishers unanswered, galloped up to Lord Saltoun and said, "G—d d—n you, don't you see those are French ! Why don't you fire at them ?" To which Saltoun replied, "Why, d—n you, don't you think we know better when to fire than you do !" Seymour thereupon vanished.

[1] *Vie militaire du Général Foy*, p. 281.

and an army, whatever its valour, which goes its own way in a fight, may collapse suddenly at any moment. In any case, if the Prussians had not come up and Napoleon had defeated Wellington, only a very small fragment of the French army would have been fit for further work ; and it is questionable whether Napoleon would have ventured to meet Blücher, who, it may be presumed, would have made things very unpleasant for Grouchy. Had the Emperor again engaged the Prussians, even successfully, he would have been left with nothing to meet the advance of the main body of the Allies ; and Paris would have been occupied in August or September instead of in July. 1815.

On the whole it may be said that Napoleon set out to achieve the impossible, and that his task was so heavy and so difficult that it was too much even for his skill and for his powers. It has been pleaded that he was no longer at his best, and that he was seriously hampered by the loss of Berthier as the Chief of his Staff. But no man is always at his best ; and Wellington was equally without his old and tried staff-officer, George Murray. Wellington also was not at his best, otherwise he would not have left sixteen thousand men at Hal during the battle. This last matter constitutes a mystery which will never be cleared up, for Wellington was not the man deliberately to leave so large a force idle, though within call of the battlefield, unless there had been some reason which in his judgment was of overpowering importance. Blücher and Gneisenau were not at their best, otherwise they would not have accepted battle in so bad a position as that of Ligny. It may account in part for their mistakes that not one of the three armies, French, Prussian and Anglo-German, was really a good one, all alike having been hastily scraped together, with imperfect organisation and a large proportion of raw troops in the ranks. But there were three great leaders at their head, and under them half-trained troops became heroes. Napoleon was out-generalled

1815. and out-fought ; but for no other man would the French horse and foot have dashed themselves so incessantly against the line of death on the heights of Mont St. Jean. Blücher's army had been defeated in a very hard fight, and himself, aged seventy-two, ridden over and cruelly battered by galloping squadrons. The old man revived himself partly by strange remedies,[1] more by his own unconquerable spirit, and heartened his men to those superhuman exertions which brought them and their guns, late indeed but in time, to the field of Waterloo.

Lastly, it must be repeated that throughout the long agony of eight terrible hours the Allied line was literally pervaded by Wellington. Wherever danger threatened, there was the thorough-bred chestnut horse and the erect figure in the saddle, wearing the low cocked hat, with the colours of Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands on the cockade, short blue cloak over a blue frock-coat and white leathers—the keen grey eyes always alert, the mouth inflexibly firm, and the expression unchangeably serene. Now he was heartening some hardly-pressed British battalion, now rallying some broken auxiliaries, now leading some young Hanoverians from the second line into the first ; and in the lulls, when the musketry was silent and the French artillery was tearing up the front, he would send his staff to the reverse slope and, attended by one officer only, would stand in the full tempest of shot and shell gazing at the French troops on the other side of the valley. He was one who was never demonstrative in any circumstances, who said little and was sparing of gesture. But his mere presence diffused an atmosphere of calm and confidence, and all who were aware of it thanked God and took courage. His eye too was everywhere.

[1] He dosed himself with gin and onions ; and on approaching Hardinge directly afterwards observed, no doubt with truth, "Ich stinke etwas." Stanhope. *Conversations of the Duke of Wellington*, p. 101.

It caught sight of a French gun-carriage flying to 1815.
splinters under the blow of an English shot ; and away flew an aide-de-camp to place under arrest the commander of a battery who had dared to fire at guns when the order was to fire only at men. Without Wellington the Allied line could never have endured to the end, and he was in a modest way aware of it. "It has been a damned nice thing," he told Creevey next day, "the nearest run thing that ever you saw in your life. By God," he added, as if thinking aloud, "I don't think it would have done if I had not been there."

The Prince of Orange on the morrow of the fight wrote anxiously to the Duke "to know how he could explain or pass over the conduct of the Netherlands' troops." The Duke answered, "I shall praise generally and not in detail, so nobody will know anything about them." There was glory enough, he said later, for every one, and he spoke truly. There was not a nation among the Allies which had not at one period or another rendered transcendent service to the cause of Europe in that short campaign ; and not one that had fought more valiantly than their most noble and gallant enemy. Had Waterloo not been a final and decisive battle, it would have been coupled with Albuera in the popular memory as a great feat of endurance and tenacity. But, though its fame may be partly obscured by later and more gigantic contests, it can never be wholly obliterated. Napoleons do not so frequently appear that the downfall of them and of the power that they have wielded can readily lose significance. By a happy coincidence it occurred simultaneously to the Commanders-in-Chief in the field and at the Horse Guards that so heroic a fight and so momentous an occasion should be commemorated, for the first time since Dunbar, by the issue of a medal to every man in the army who had been present ; and this medal is still the possession most highly treasured alike in the highest and the humblest of English homes.

1815. The design is of little merit, yet it is unique, and worthily unique, among British military medals, for it bears on the reverse, besides the name and date of the battle, the name of him without whom there would have been no victory—the one word Wellington.

APPENDIX I

EFFECTIVE STRENGTH OF THE BRITISH ARMY. SHOWING ORGANISATION BY BRIGADES AND DIVISIONS, 16TH JANUARY 1814.

CAVALRY (Lieut.-Gen. Sir Stapleton Cotton).

	Regiment.	Effective Rank and File.
Maj.-Gen. O'Loughlin	1st Life Guards	217
	2nd Life Guards	260
	Blues	277
Maj.-Gen. Hon. W. Ponsonby (Lord C. Manners, 3rd Dragoons, from 25th January)	5th Dragoon Guards	336
	3rd Dragoon Guards	358
	4th Dragoon Guards	386
Maj.-Gen. Vandeleur	12th Light Dragoons	387
	16th Light Dragoons	415
Maj.-Gen. Fane	13th Light Dragoons	348
	14th Light Dragoons	417
Col. Vivian	18th Hussars	427
	1st Hussars K.G.L.	426
Col. Arentschild	1st Dragoons K.G.L.	339
	2nd Dragoons K.G.L.	332
(Maj-Gen. Fane)	3rd Dragoon Guards	350
	1st Royal Dragoons	359
Maj.-Gen. Lord E. Somerset	7th Hussars	513
	10th Hussars	459
	15th Hussars	466
Viscount Barbacena	1st, 6th, 11th, 12th Portuguese Cavalry	894
Col. Campbell	4th Portuguese Cavalry	264
		10,179

INFANTRY.

First Division (Lieut.-Gen. Sir John Hope and Maj.-Gen. Howard).

	Regiment.	Effective Rank and File.
Maj.-Gen. Maitland	1/1st Guards	785
	3/1st Guards	776
Maj.-Gen. Hon. E. Stopford	1st Coldstream Guards	767
	1/3rd Guards	864
	1 Company 5/60th	50
Maj.-Gen. Hinüber	1st Line Battalion K.G.L.	574
	2nd Line Battalion K.G.L.	532
	5th Line Battalion K.G.L.	482
	1st Light Battalion K.G.L.	568
	2nd Light Battalion K.G.L.	585
Maj.-Gen. Lord Aylmer	1/62nd	427
	76th	546
	77th	170
	85th	430
	1/37th (from March)	...
	Total First Division	8230

Second Division (Lieut.-Gen. Sir Rowland Hill and Lieut.-Gen. Sir William Stewart).

Maj.-Gen. Barnes	1/50th		345
	1/71st		498
	1/92nd		391
	1 Company 5/60th		49
Maj.-Gen. Byng	1/3rd		530
	1/57th		438
	1st Provisional Battalion	2/31st	271
		1/66th	278
	1 Company 5/60th		45
Maj.-Gen. Pringle	1/28th		485
	2/34th		410
	1/39th		565
	1 Company 5/60th		47
Col. Harding	6th and 8th Portuguese Line, 6th Caçadores		1918
	Total Second Division		6270

Unattached Portuguese Division (Maj.-Gen. Le Cor).

Brig.-Gen. Da Costa	2nd and 14th Portuguese Line	1802

	Regiment.	Effective Rank and File.
Brig.-Gen. Buchan	4th, 10th Portuguese Line, 10th Caçadores	1969
	Total Le Cor's Portuguese Division	2771

Third Division (Lieut.-Gen. Sir T. Picton).

Maj.-Gen. Brisbane	1/45th	496
	74th	438
	1/88th	738
	4 Companies 5/60th	197
Maj.-Gen. Keane	1/5th	640
	2/83rd	371
	2/87th	305
	94th	350
Maj.-Gen. Power	9th, 12th Portuguese Line, 11th Caçadores	1782
	Total Third Division	5317

Fourth Division (Lieut.-Gen. Hon. Sir G. L. Cole).

Maj.-Gen. W. Anson	3/27th	564
	1/40th	468
	1/48th	413
	2nd Provisional Battalion 2nd	276
	2nd Provisional Battalion 2/53rd	204
	1 Company 5/60th	45
Maj.-Gen. Ross	1/7th	604
	20th	395
	1/23rd	420
	1 Company Brunswick-Oels	42
Col. Vasconcellos	11th, 23rd Portuguese Line, 7th Caçadores	1958
	Total Fourth Division	5389

Fifth Division (Maj.-Gen. Hon. C. Colville).

Maj.-Gen. Hay	3/1st	320
	1/9th	482
	1/38th	364
	2/47th	256
	1 Company Brunswick-Oels	25

	Regiment.	Effective Rank and File.
Maj.-Gen. Robinson	1/4th	344
	2/59th	268
	2/84th	294
	1 Company Brunswick-Oels	20
Col. de Regoa	2nd, 15th Portuguese Line, 8th Caçadores	1224
	Total Fifth Division	3597

Sixth Division (Lieut-Gen. Sir H. Clinton).

Maj.-Gen. Pack	1/42nd	669
	1/79th	594
	1/91st	458
	1 Company 5/60th	37
Maj.-Gen. Lambert	1/11th	477
	1/32nd	464
	1/36th	365
	1/61st	438
Col. Douglas	8th, 12th Portuguese Line, 9th Caçadores	1775
	Total Sixth Division	5243

Seventh Division (Maj.-Gen. Walker).

Col. Gardiner	1/6th	709
	3rd Provisional Battalion 24th	271
	3rd Provisional Battalion 2/58th	184
	9 Companies Brunswick-Oels	250
Maj.-Gen. Inglis	51st	268
	68th	238
	1/82nd	489
	Chasseurs Britanniques	288
Col. Doyle	7th, 19th Portuguese Line, 2nd Caçadores	1912
	Total Seventh Division	4609

Light Division (Maj.-Gen. C. Alten).

Maj.-Gen. Kempt	1/43rd	724
	1/95th	422
	3/95th	365
Col. Colborne	1/52nd	714
	2/95th	350
	17th Portuguese Line, 1st, 3rd Caçadores	1350
	Total Light Division	3925

Unattached.

	Regiment.	Effective Rank and File.
Maj.-Gen. Bradford	13th, 24th Portuguese Line, 5th Caçadores	1449
Brig.-Gen. Campbell	1st, 16th Portuguese Line, 4th Caçadores	1561
Lieut.-Col. Dundas	Royal Staff Corps	154
Capt. Gibson	13th Royal Veteran Battalion	871
	Total Infantry	49,126
	Total Cavalry	10,179
		59,305
	Add one-eighth for officers and serjeants, say	7,500
	Total of all ranks, say	67,000

ANALYSIS

British Cavalry, rank and file	9,021
Portuguese Cavalry, rank and file	1,158
British Infantry (including Germans), rank and file	32,086
Portuguese Infantry	17,040
	59,305

APPENDIX II

THE ANGLO-ALLIED ARMY IN THE WATERLOO CAMPAIGN

Commander-in-Chief.—Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington, K.G.

Quarter-master-General.—Colonel Oliver De Lancey.

(G.) signifies regiments that had served with Graham in the Netherlands; (P.) regiments that had served in the Peninsular War.

First Corps (The Prince of Orange)

First Division (Maj.-Gen. Cooke).

1st British Brigade Maj.-Gen. Maitland	2/1st Guards (G.) 3/1st Guards
2nd British Brigade Maj.-Gen. Sir John Byng	2nd Coldstream Guards (G.) 2/3rd Guards (G.)

Artillery—Sandham's British and Kuhlmann's K.G.L. field-batteries.

Total—4061 infantry, 12 guns.

Third Division (Lieut.-Gen. Sir Charles Alten).

5th British Brigade Maj.-Gen. Sir Colin Halkett	2/30th (G.), 33rd (G.) 2/69th (G.), 2/73rd (G.)
2nd K.G.L. Brigade Col. von Ompteda	1st and 2nd Light Battalions K.G.L. 5th and 8th Line Battalions K.G.L.
1st Hanoverian Brigade Maj.-Gen. Count Kielmansegge	6 Hanoverian battalions

Artillery—Lloyd's British and Cleeves's K.G.L. field-batteries.

Total—6970 infantry, 12 guns.

Second Netherlandish Division (Lieut.-Gen. Baron de Perponcher).

1st Brigade Maj.-Gen. de Bijlandt	5 Netherlandish battalions
2nd Brigade Prince Bernard of Saxe-Wiemar	5 Nassau battalions

Artillery—One field-battery, Bijleveld's horse-battery.

Total—7700 infantry, 12 guns.

Third Netherlandish Division (Lieut.-Gen. Baron de Chassé).

1st Brigade Maj.-Gen. Detmers	6 Netherlandish battalions
2nd Brigade Maj.-Gen. d'Aubremé	6 Netherlandish battalions

Artillery—A field-battery and a horse-battery, Netherlandish.

Total—6669 infantry, 16 guns.

Total First Corps—25,400 infantry, 56 guns.

Second Corps (Lieut.-Gen. Lord Hill)

Second Division (Lieut.-Gen. Sir H. Clinton).

3rd British Brigade Maj.-Gen. Adam	1/52nd (P.), 1/71st (P.) 2/95th (P.), 3/95th (G.)
1st K.G.L. Brigade Col. Du Plat	1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Line Battalions K.G.L.
3rd Hanoverian Brigade Col. Hew Halkett	4 Landwehr battalions

Artillery—Bolton's British and Sympher's K.G.L. field-batteries.

Total—6833 infantry, 12 guns.

Fourth Division (Lieut.-Gen. Sir C. Colville).

4th British Brigade Col. Mitchell	3/14th, 1/23rd (P.), 51st (P.)
6th British Brigade Maj.-Gen. Johnstone	2/35th (G.), 1/54th (G.) 59th, 1/91st (G.)
6th Hanoverian Brigade Maj.-Gen. Sir James Lyon	5 Hanoverian battalions

Artillery—Brome's British and Rettberg's Hanoverian field-batteries.

Total—7217 infantry, 12 guns.

Corps of Prince Frederick of the Netherlands.

1st Netherlandish Division, Lieut.-Gen. Stedman	D'Hauw's Brigade, 6 battalions De Eerens's Brigade, 5 battalions

Total—6437 infantry, and one field-battery of 8 guns.

Anthing's Netherland Indian Brigade	5 battalions and 1 field-battery

Total—3499 infantry, 8 guns.

TOTAL SECOND CORPS—23,986 infantry, 40 guns.

CAVALRY

1st Brigade, Maj.-Gen. Lord E. Somerset	1st and 2nd Life Guards, Blues
2nd Brigade, Maj.-Gen. Sir W. Ponsonby	Royals, Greys, Inniskillings
3rd Brigade, Maj.-Gen. Sir W. Dörnberg	1st and 2nd Light Dragoons K.G.L. 23rd Light Dragoons
4th Brigade, Maj.-Gen. Sir J. Vandeleur	11th, 12th, 16th Light Dragoons
5th Brigade, Maj.-Gen. Sir Colquhoun Grant	7th and 15th Hussars 2nd Hussars K.G.L.
6th Brigade, Maj.-Gen. Sir Hussey Vivian	10th and 18th Hussars 1st Hussars K.G.L.
7th Brigade, Col. Arentschild	13th Light Dragoons 3rd Hussars K.G.L.

Artillery — Bull's (howitzers), Gardiner's, Mercer's, Ramsay's, Webler-Smith's, and Whinyates's horse-batteries.

Total—8471 cavalry, 36 guns.

1st Hanoverian Cavalry Brigade	3 regiments, 1682 men
Brunswick Cavalry	1 regiment and 1 squadron, 922 cavalry
Netherlandish Cavalry	3 brigades (Trip, de Ghigny, Van Merlen), 7 regiments, and 2 half-batteries

Total—3405 cavalry and 8 guns.

TOTAL CAVALRY—14,482 and 44 guns.

GARRISONS

Seventh Division.

7th British Brigade — 2/25th (G.), 2/37th (G.), 2/78th (G.); 3 British garrison battalions.

Total—3233 men.

Hanoverian Reserve Corps 12 Landwehr battalions in 4 brigades

Total—9000 men.

TOTAL GARRISONS—12,233 men.

GRAND TOTAL (including 1240 Engineers and waggon-train)—105,834 men and 204 guns.

RESERVE

Fifth Division (Lieut-Gen. Sir Thomas Picton).

8th British Brigade, Maj.-Gen. Sir James Kempt — 1/28th (P.), 1/32nd (P.); 1/79th (P.), 1/95th (P.)

9th British Brigade, Maj.-Gen. Sir Denis Pack — 3/1st (P.), 1/42nd (P.); 2/44th (P.), 1/92nd (P.)

5th Hanoverian Brigade, Col. von Vincke — 4 Landwehr battalions

Artillery—Rogers's British and Braun's Hanoverian field-batteries.

Total—7158 infantry, 12 guns.

Sixth Division.

10th British Brigade, Maj.-Gen. Sir John Lambert — 1/4th (P)., 1/27th (P.); 1/40th (P.), 2/81st (P.)

4th Hanoverian Brigade, Col. Best — 4 Landwehr battalions

Artillery—Unett's and Sinclair's field-batteries.

Total—5149 infantry, 12 guns.

British Reserve Artillery.

2 horse-batteries (Ross and Bean).
3 field-batteries (Morisson, Hutchesson, Ilbert).

Brunswick Corps (The Duke of Brunswick).

Advanced guard, 4 companies infantry, detachment cavalry, 2 brigades (each 3 battalions), and 2 batteries.

Total—5376 infantry and 16 guns.

Nassau Contingent (General von Kruse), 3 battalions.

Total—2841 infantry.

Total Reserve—20,524 infantry, 64 guns.

TOTAL STRENGTH BY NATIONALITIES

Nation.	Infantry.	Cavalry.	Guns.
British	20,310 rank and file	5,911 rank and file	90
K.G.L.	3,285 „ „	2,560 „ „	18
Hanoverians	13,793 „ „	1,682 „ „	12
Brunswick	5,376 „ „	922 „ „	16
Nassau	7,308 all ranks	...	...
Netherlanders	18,838 „	3,405 all ranks	56
	68,910	14,480	192

(Taken from *The Campaign of 1815*, by Lieut.-Col. W. H. James.)

APPENDIX III

STRENGTH OF THE BRITISH ARMY PRESENT AT WATERLOO

(Abridged from the Field-State printed by Siborne, which, however, seems from internal evidence to be imperfect.)

Division.	Brigade.	Regiments.	Officers.	Other ranks.
		R.A.	175	4769
		K.G.L. Art.	25	546
		R.E.	37	...
		Sappers & Miners	10	735
		Waggon-Train	16	285
		Staff Corps	18	251
Cav.	1st	1st L.G.	16	229
		2nd L.G.	20	215
		Blues	19	232
		K.D.G.	29	568
	2nd	1st. D.	30	398
		2nd D.	28	414
		6th D.	26	419
	3rd	1st L.D.K.G.L.	34	500
		2nd L.D.K.G.L.	33	472
		23rd L.D.	28	313
	4th	11th L.D.	27	408
		12th L.D.	26	401
		16th L.D.	30	403
	5th	7th Hrs.	18	344
		15th Hrs.	28	419
		2nd Hrs. K.G.L.	36	547
	6th	10th Hrs.	26	426
		18th Hrs.	25	417
		1st Hrs. K.G.L.	36	550
		13th L.D.	28	420
		3rd Hrs. K.G.L.	37	647

Division.	Brigade.	Regiments.	Officers.	Other ranks.
		INFANTRY.		
1st	1st	2/1st Gds.	29	752
	Brit.	3/1st Gds.	29	818
	2nd	2/C. Gds.	36	1006
	Brit.	2/3rd Gds.	34	1021
3rd	5th	2/30th	40	593
	Brit.	1/33rd	31	535
		2/69th	30	511
		2/73rd	23	475
	2nd	5th Line K.G.L.	31	471
	K.G.L.	8th Line K.G.L.	32	513
		1st Light K.G.L.	32	458
		2nd Light K.G.L.	31	406
2nd	3rd	1/52nd	59	1079
	Brit.	1/71st	50	931
		Det. 3/95th	10	193
		2/95th	34	621
	1st	1st Line K.G.L.	29	426
	K.G.L.	2nd Line K.G.L.	29	463
		3rd Line K.G.L.	30	553
		4th Line K.G.L.	30	448
	4th	3/14th	38	592
	Brit.	1/23rd	44	697
		1/51st	45	474
5th	8th	1/28th	35	521
	Brit.	1/32nd	26	477
		1/79th	26	414
		1/95th	17	401
	9th	3/1st	36	417
	Brit.	1/42nd	17	312
		2/44th	20	450
		1/92nd	22	400
	10th	1/4th	27	643
	Brit.	1/27th	21	729
		1/40th	43	819

APPENDIX IV

COMPOSITION OF THE PRUSSIAN ARMY UNDER FIELD-MARSHAL PRINCE VON BLÜCHER

Chief of Staff.—Lieut.-General Count von Gneisenau.

Quarter-master-General.—Major-General von Grolmann.

Ist Army Corps (Lieut.-Gen. von Ziethen)

1st Brigade	Steinmetz	9069 men	16 guns
2nd „	Pirch II.	8018 „	18 „
3rd „	Jagow	7146 „	8 „
4th „	Henckel	4900 „	8 „
Reserve Cavalry	Röder	2175 „	8 „
Reserve Artillery	Rentzell		30 „

Total Ist Corps—31,308 men, 88 guns.

IInd Army Corps (Gen. von Pirch I.)

5th Brigade	Tippelskirch	7153 men	8 guns
6th „	Krafft	6762 „	8 „
7th „	Brause	6503 „	8 „
8th „	Bose	6584 „	8 „
Reserve Cavalry	Wahlen	4471 „	8 „
Reserve Artillery			32 „

Total IInd Corps—31,473 men, 72 guns.

IIIrd Army Corps (Lieut.-Gen. von Thielmann)

9th Brigade	Borcke	7262 men	8 guns
10th „	Kemphen	4419 „	8 „
11th „	Lück	3980 „	8 „
12th „	Stulpnagel	6614 „	8 „
Reserve Cavalry	Hobe	1981 „	8 „
Reserve Artillery	Grevenitz		16 „

Total IIIrd Corps—24,256 men, 56 guns.

IVth Corps (Gen. Count Bülow)

13th Brigade . .	Hake . . .	6560 men	8 guns
14th „ . .	Ryssel . . .	7138 „	8 „
15th „ . .	Losthin . . .	7143 „	8 „
16th „ . .	Hiller . . .	6423 „	8 „
Reserve Cavalry .	Prince William .	3321 „	16 „
Reserve Artillery .	Bardeben		32 „

Total IVth Corps—30,585 men, 80 guns.

SUMMARY

Ist Corps . .	27,817 infantry	2,675 cavalry	88 guns
IInd Corps .	25,836 „	4,471 „	72 „
IIIrd Corps .	20,611 „	2,581 „	56 „
IVth Corps .	25,381 „	3,921 „	80 „
Total .	99,645 „	13,648 „	296 „

(exclusive of gunners, engineers, and train.)

(Abstracted from Appendix to *The Campaign of 1815*, by Lieut-Col. W. H. James.)

APPENDIX V

COMPOSITION OF THE FRENCH ARMY UNDER THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON

Chief of Staff.—Marshal Soult, Duke of Dalmatia.

Imperial Guard (Drouot)

Infantry.	Men.
Friant—1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Grenadiers	4,140
Morand—1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Chasseurs	4,603
Duhesme—1st, 2nd Tirailleurs, 1st, 2nd Voltigeurs .	4,283
Total Infantry . . .	13,026
Cavalry.	
Lefebvre Desnoëttes—Lancers and Mounted Chasseurs Guyot—Dragoons and Horse Grenadiers . . D'Autancourt—Gendarmerie d'Élite . . .	4100
Artillery.	
Desvaux—13 foot- and 3 horse-batteries.	
Engineers and sailors of the Guard.	
Total—20,755 men, 122 guns.	

First Corps d'Armée (D'Erlon)

First Division. Quiot.	? Brigade, 54th, 55th Line Bourgeois's Brigade, 28th, 105th Line	4000
Second Division. Douzelot.	Schmitz's Brigade, 13th Light, 17th Line Aulard's Brigade, 19th, 51st Line	5132
Third Division. Marcognet.	Noguez's Brigade, 21st, 46th Line Grenier's Brigade, 25th, 45th Line	3900

		Men.
Fourth Division. Durutte.	Pégot's Brigade, 8th, 29th Line Brue's Brigade, 58th, 95th Line	3853
First Cavalry Division. Jacquinot.	Bruno's Brigade (3rd Chass., 7th Hussars) Gobrecht's Brigade (3rd, 4th Lancers)	1706

Artillery—5 foot-batteries, 1 horse-battery.

Engineers—5 companies.

Total (with train)—20,731 men, 46 guns.

Second Corps d'Armée (Reille)

Fifth Division. Bachelu.	Husson's Brigade, 2nd Light, 61st Line Campy's Brigade, 72nd, 108th Line	4103
Sixth Division. Jérôme Bonaparte.	Bauduin's Brigade, 1st, 3rd Light Soye's Brigade, 1st, 2nd Line	7819
Seventh Division. Girard.	Devilliers's Brigade, 11th Light, 82nd Line Piat's Brigade, 12th Light, 4th Line	3925
Ninth Division. Foy.	Gauthier's Brigade, 92nd, 93rd Line B. Jamin's Brigade, 4th Light, 100th Line	4788
Second Cavalry Division. Piré.	Huberts's Brigade, 1st, 6th Chasseurs Vathiez's Brigade, 5th, 6th Lancers	2064

Artillery—5 foot-batteries, 1 horse-battery.

Engineers—5 companies.

Total (with train)—25,179 men, 46 guns.

Third Corps d'Armée (Vandamme)

Eighth Division. Lefol.	Billard's Brigade, 15th Light, 23rd Line Corsin's Brigade, 37th, 64th Line	4541
Tenth Division. Habert.	Gengoux's Brigade, 34th, 88th Line Dupeyroux's Brigade, 22nd, 70th Line 2nd Swiss Foreign Legion	5024

		Men.
Eleventh Division. Berthezène.	Dufour's Brigade, 12th, 56th Line Lagarde's Brigade, 33rd, 86th Line	5565
Third Cavalry Division. Domont.	Dommanget's Brigade, 4th, 9th Chasseurs Vinot's Brigade, 12th Chasseurs	1017

Artillery—4 foot-batteries, 1 horse-battery.

Engineers—3 companies.

Total (with train)—18,105 men, 46 guns.

Fourth Corps d'Armée (Gérard)

Twelfth Division. Pécheux.	Romme's Brigade, 30th, 96th Line Schœffer's Brigade, 6th Light, 63rd Line	4719
Thirteenth Division. Vichéry.	Le Capitaine's Brigade, 59th, 76th Line Desprez's Brigade, 48th, 60th Line	4145
Fourteenth Division. Bourmont.	Hulot's Brigade, 9th Light, 11th Line Toussaint's Brigade, 44th, 50th Line	4237
Seventh Cavalry Division. Maurin.	Vallin's Brigade, 6th Hussars, 8th Chasseurs Berruyer's Brigade, 6th, 16th Dragoons	1500

Artillery—5 foot-batteries, 1 horse-battery.

Engineers—3 companies.

Total (with train)—16,219 men, 46 guns.

Sixth Corps d'Armée (Lobau)

Nineteenth Division. Simmer.	Bellair's Brigade, 5th, 11th Line M. Jamin's Brigade, 27th, 84th Line	3953
Twentieth Division. Jannin.	Bony's Brigade, 5th Light, 10th Line Tromelin's Brigade, 47th, 107th Line	2202

		Men.
Twenty-first Division. Teste.	Lafitte's Brigade, 8th Light, 40th Line Penne's Brigade, 65th, 75th Line	2418

Artillery—4 foot-batteries.

Engineers—3 companies.

Total (with train)—10,821 men, 32 guns.

Reserve Cavalry (Marshal Grouchy)

First Cavalry Corps (Pajol)

Fourth Cavalry Division. P. Soult.	St. Laurent's Brigade Ameil's Brigade	1st, 4th, 5th Hussars	2536
Fifth Cavalry Division. Subervie.	A. de Colbert's Brigade, 1st, 2nd Lancers Merlin's Brigade, 11th Chasseurs		

Artillery—2 horse-batteries.

Second Cavalry Corps (Exelmans)

Ninth Cavalry Division. Strolz.	Burthe's Brigade, 5th, 13th Dragoons Vincent's Brigade, 15th, 20th Dragoons	3116
Tenth Cavalry Division. Chastel.	Bonnemains's Brigade, 4th, 12th Dragoons Berton's Brigade, 14th, 17th Dragoons	

Artillery—2 horse-batteries.

Third Cavalry Corps (Kellermann)

Eleventh Cavalry Division. l'Héritier.	Piquet's Brigade, 2nd, 7th Dragoons Guiton's Brigade, 8th, 11th Cuirassiers	3400
Twelfth Cavalry Division. Roussel d'Harbal.	Blancard's Brigade, 1st, 2nd Carbineers Donop's Brigade, 2nd, 3rd Cuirassiers	

Artillery—2 horse-batteries.

FOURTH CAVALRY CORPS (MILHAUD)

		Men.
Thirteenth Cavalry Division. Wathier.	Dubois's Brigade, 1st, 4th Cuirassiers Travers's Brigade, 7th, 12th Cuirassiers	2797
Fourteenth Cavalry Division. Delort.	Farine's Brigade, 5th, 10th Cuirassiers Vial's Brigade, 6th, 9th Cuirassiers	

Artillery—2 horse-batteries.

TOTAL RESERVE CAVALRY—11,849 men (without train), 48 guns.

SUMMARY

	Infantry.	Cavalry.	Artillery.	Engineers, etc.	Guns.
Imperial Guard .	13,026	4,100	2,786	109	122
1st Corps d'Armée .	16,885	1,706	1,096	330	46
2nd „ „ .	20,635	2,064	1,700	409	46
3rd „ „ .	15,130	1,017	1,084	146	38
4th „ „ .	13,401	1,500	1,417	201	38
6th „ „ .	8,573	...	765	189	32
Reserve Cavalry .	...	11,849	1,222	...	48
Total .	87,650	22,236	10,070	1,384	370

Grand Total (including train)—124,139 men, 370 guns.

(Abridged from Appendix to *The Campaign of 1815*, by Lieut.-Col. W. H. James.)

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